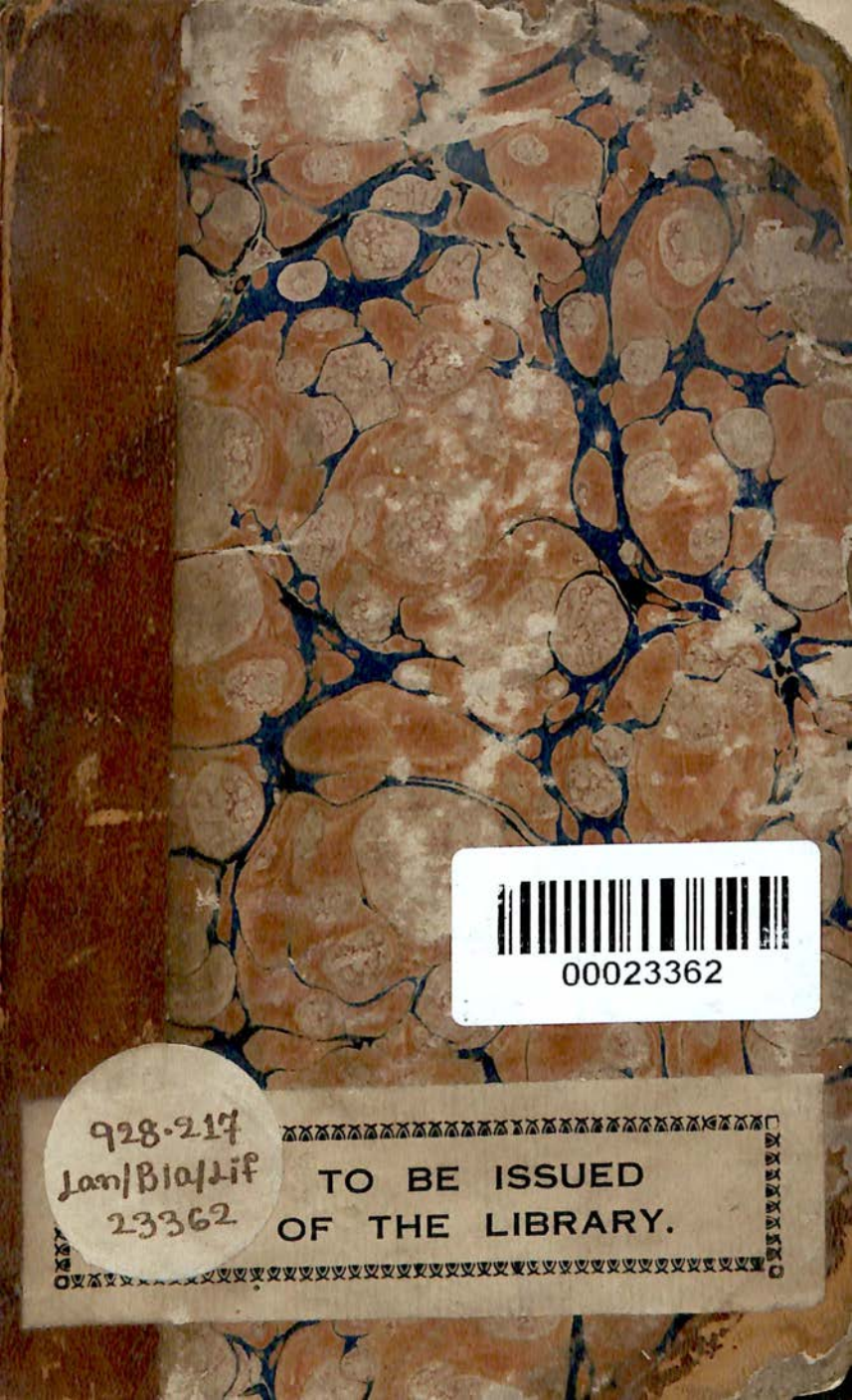
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LIFE

AND

LITERARY REMAINS

OF

L. E. L.

VOL. II.

JOHN LEIGHTON, PRINTER,
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LIFE

AND

LITERARY REMAINS

OF

L. E. L.

BY LAMAN BLANCHARD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

It is a weary and a bitter hour,
When first the real disturbs the poet's world,
And he distrusts the future. Not for that
Should cold despondency weigh down the soul.
It is a glorious gift, bright Poetry,
And should be thankfully and nobly used.
Let it look up to Heaven!"—L. E. L.

LONDON:
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1841.

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CASTRUCCIO CASTRUCANI;

OR,

THE TRIUMPH OF LUCCA.

A TRAGEDY.

BY

L. E. L.

INTRODUCTION.

THE scene is laid in Lucca, during the contests between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines; but my object has not been to bring forward old party distinctions, in which no one now takes any interest, but to represent the first rising against the feudal system, which has since led to such important results. Castruccio is the (attempted) ideal of the hero and the patriot. He has himself been exiled and oppressed; out of this early experience grows his sympathy with the wrongs of the city to whose cause he devotes himself, while the glory of Lucca is the poetry and passion of his life. Count Leoni is merely one of a faction, referring all things to small and individual interests. He is the representative of the few, while Castruccio is that of the many.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

CASTRUCCIO CASTRUCANI—*Leader of the popular party in Lucca.*

COUNT GONSALVI—*Envoy from Florence.*

COUNT ARREZI—*one of the secretly opposed Nobles.*

COUNT LEONI—*his Nephew, just returned from travel.*

CESARIO—*Secretary to Castruccio.*

Nobles, Citizens, Soldiers, &c.

WOMEN.

BIANCA—*Daughter of Count Arrezi, betrothed to Castruccio.*

CLARICHA—*an orphan dependant in the house of Arrezi.*

Ladies, Attendants, &c.

Scene lies in Lucca.

CASTRUCCIO CASTRUCANI.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Market-place.*

Citizens grouped together, talking earnestly.

1ST CITIZEN.

How was he taken? for he would have fought
A dozen single handed.

2ND CITIZEN.

Last night, returning from the Count Arrezi,
To whose fair daughter he has been betrothed,
He was surrounded by those foreign bandits
That wear Count Ludolph's colours.

1ST CITIZEN.

Work fitting to their mercenary hands.

2ND CITIZEN.

I saw the whole, for I was late at work.
Castruccio pass'd me as I hurried home;

Dark as it was, I knew his stately form!
He cross'd the street, and out of ambush sprung
The secret enemy. I saw him fling
His cloak upon the ground—out flash'd his blade—
But the dark night was lit with glittering steel,
And twenty swords were drawn to meet but one.
I heard the clash, then a fierce struggle—oaths—
And he was hurried past: the moon shone out,
And there lay on the ground a broken sword,
But red with blood.

Enter CESARIO.

1ST CITIZEN.

Here comes his young and trusted officer,
The Count Cesario; he will tell us more.

2ND CITIZEN.

What of Castruccio's fate—what of our chief?

CESARIO.

The treachery of the nobles has prevail'd.
Castruccio lies within the city prison,
Thither convey'd by Ludolph's foreign band;
A thousand dangers circle him around,
The secret dagger, and the open scaffold.

2ND CITIZEN.

Well, now we have no friend!

CESARIO.

He was your friend; the meanest citizen
Found, in the shadow of Castruccio's name,
His best security.

2ND CITIZEN.

He never wrung from us our hard-earn'd gains.

1ST CITIZEN.

Our lives were precious to him; must he die?

2ND CITIZEN.

The nobles are too strong.

CESARIO.

'Tis for your sake they are his enemies.
He might have shared their power, and kept ye slaves.

2ND CITIZEN.

We have been much oppress'd; until he came,
No one could sit in quiet at his door.
Money and blood were the perpetual cry
Of our small tyrants.

CESARIO.

So will it be again,
If your protector perish.

ALL.

He shall not die!

CESARIO.

The nobles will not listen to your prayers.

1ST CITIZEN.

We will try threats.

CESARIO.

Threats are as vain as prayers—ye must try deeds.

2ND CITIZEN.

What can we do? We are unarm'd and weak!

CESARIO.

But strong in your good cause. Oh, ye are strong,
If ye would know your strength!

2ND CITIZEN.

When he was free, we could defy the world.

CESARIO.

Then give him what ye owe him—liberty.

2ND CITIZEN.

All Lucca will rise up!

1ST CITIZEN.

Before this, I have fought upon his side;
Up! let our watch-word be Castruccio's name.

CESARIO.

Let the high Heaven hear it; will ye stand
Meek, pitiful spectators of his death?

2ND CITIZEN.

The nobles will not shed Castruccio's blood.

1ST CITIZEN.

When have they been so merciful to spare?

2ND CITIZEN.

They will not spare from mercy, but from fear.

CESARIO.

Who should they fear?

2ND CITIZEN.

The oppress'd and desperate.

CESARIO.

Not if oppression find relief in words.

1ST CITIZEN.

There's not a street in Lucca but should run
Red with our blood before Castruccio die!

CESARIO.

'Tis well, if ye dare act upon these words.

ALL.

We dare.

CESARIO.

Let each one to his neighbours instantly;

Gather what force ye can; by two and threes
Return, and then we'll try the prison's strength.

2ND CITIZEN

Three of the nobles come this way.

CESARIO.

We must disperse until the hour arrive,
What time the nobles seek the Senate-house.

2ND CITIZEN.

Where they will meet to doom Castruccio's death.

CESARIO.

Short space is ours, be silent, and away.
In one half hour seek ye the market-place;
Castruccio Castrucani is the word.—[*Exeunt.*

Enter NOBLES.

1ST NOBLE (*putting two of the Citizens aside*).

Out of the way, ye loiterers.

2ND NOBLE.

What do ye here, wasting what ye call time,
And then complain of want?

1ST CITIZEN (*Aside*).

Our time will come.—[*Exit.*

1ST NOBLE.

What said the knave?

2ND NOBLE.

Good saints, I know as little as I care.
I do not share Castruccio's sympathy
For those who are the dust beneath my feet.

1ST NOBLE.

'Tis pity of him; for more gallant knight

Ne'er led the foremost, still himself the first.
I grudge the yielding to the Florentines
That now must follow.

2ND NOBLE.

Better submission to the distant power
Than that within our gates; the citizens,
Stirr'd by Castruccio, talk of their rights:
Time was, a creditor, grown troublesome,
Might hang, a useful warning, at our door;
But Castrucani has so changed the state,
That not a knave who walks the market-place
But holds his life as precious as our own.
Why Lucca is as quiet as a bower.

1ST NOBLE.

We have had stirring times outside our walls,
Victory on victory o'er the Florentines.

2ND NOBLE.

And this has dazzled ye: ye have not mark'd
How stronger, hour by hour, has grown his sway.
Among ourselves, if it were left to him,
We should not have a single privilege
Beyond the meanest citizen.

Enter the COUNT LEONI, *as if from a journey, speaking to his Page as he enters.*

See all your charges safe: then follow me,
Bringing the casket where my cousin's name
Is work'd in pearls.

1ST NOBLE.

Welcome again to Lucca, Count Leoni.

(*All gather round him.*)

LEONI.

Kind greeting to you all: I am right glad
To see my friends and native walls again.

2ND NOBLE.

You're come upon us in a stirring time.

1ST NOBLE.

Tell him at once Castruccio is our prisoner.

2ND NOBLE.

You're over hasty; for the count may be
One of Castruccio's partisans.

1ST NOBLE.

Arrezi always liked the strongest side,
And hence betrothed his daughter to Castruccio.

LEONI.

What, to my cousin—to the fair Bianca?

1ST NOBLE.

You do not look as if you liked the news.

2ND NOBLE.

Will you go with us to the Senate-house?
Your uncle will be there.

LEONI.

As yet I am too new to join your councils.

2ND NOBLE.

We may not loiter, even now awaits
The envoy sent from Florence.

LEONI.

Make ye what terms ye can—secure yourselves:
The Florentines will gladly aid your cause.
They hate Castruccio—hate, because they fear.

2ND NOBLE.

We are too late: farewell, we meet anon. [*Exeunt.*

LEONI (*Solus*).

Well, fortune, thou hast stood my friend at last!
I came to struggle with mine enemy,
And, lo! he is subdued. Castruccio lies
A prisoner at the mercy of his foes.
For him there is one only ransom—death!
Soon will these hasty nobles want a head:
The power and wealth of our most ancient house
Point to Arrezi as the nobles' chief,
And he will be a cypher in my hands.
Now will my secret trafficking with Florence
Stand in good stead: my path is clear before me.
The odium of the Castrucani's death,
And the inglorious peace they now must make,
Rests with the nobles. Fortune, now thy tide
Is on the turn—I dare to ride thy waves.
Strange that Castruccio, who through life has been
My too successful rival, now should make
My first step in the ladder of ambition.
Now must I seek my cousin, fair Bianca,
So nearly lost; how will she greet me now?
Castruccio's sway has been right absolute,
Or never had Arrezi let his child
Link with our house's ancient enemy. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Senate-house.*

COUNT GONSALVI, COUNT ARREZI, NOBLES, ATTENDANTS, &c.

GONSALVI (*taking a seat*).

Henceforward Florence claims your fealty;
She will secure you in all ancient rights,
Immunity, and privilege: her sword
Will stand between ye and your enemies.
For this a yearly tribute must be paid
Of twenty thousand florins.

2ND NOBLE.

Our treasury's low, my lord.

GONSALVI.

And so is ours,
Exhausted by the late vexatious war.

2ND NOBLE.

Urged by the Count Castruccio, not ourselves.

GONSALVI.

It must be paid.

2ND NOBLE.

Well, well,
The goldsmiths round our market-place are rich.
The citizens, too, better being poor,
As more obedient, right that they should pay
The penalty of their rebellious spirit.

GONSALVI (*rising*).

I leave you till to-morrow, when I bring

The treaty ready for your signatures,
And will receive your homage and your oaths.—[*Exit.*

1ST NOBLE.

Homage and tribute—these are bitter words!

2ND NOBLE.

Less bitter than the Castrucani's sway.

1ST NOBLE.

To-day must fix his fate. What is his doom?

SEVERAL NOBLES.

Death!

ARREZI.

Rather say exile.

2ND NOBLE.

Yes, and one week sees him again our chief!

ARREZI.

He may be kept strict prisoner.

2ND NOBLE.

And keep perpetual terror o'er our heads.

SEVERAL NOBLES.

His scaffold is our safety.

ARREZI.

We dare not raise that scaffold.

SEVERAL NOBLES.

Dare not!

ARREZI.

The citizens would rise in his defence.

1ST NOBLE.

Not with our swords to teach them what they are.

2ND NOBLE.

Why risk a tumult that we well may spare,
While Lucca has a dagger?

1ST NOBLE.

He shall not perish by the assassin's hand.

2ND NOBLE.

So that he perish, little matters how.

ARREZI.

The tumult would be fearful.

1ST NOBLE.

Even now
The people gather fiercely in the streets.

2ND NOBLE.

Let them not see him, they will soon forget.

ARREZI.

Hark to the shouts!

1ST NOBLE.

I have a useful knave, who, give him gold,
Stabs and forgets; I'll send him to the prison.

2ND NOBLE.

The noise approaches, look ye to your swords.

1ST NOBLE.

Delay is fatal—let Castruccio die!

(*While he is speaking the doors are burst open, and* CASTRUCCIO *enters, armed and attended.*

CASTRUCCIO.

Not yet, nor by your hand! Thanks, gentlemen,
For an indifferent lodging. I have learnt
That prisons, tenanted with thoughts of death,
Is not a punishment to order lightly;
Therefore, ye shall not fill my vacant place.

2ND NOBLE.

The game is yours—I, for one, ask not mercy!

CASTRUCCIO.

And, therefore, worthier to have unask'd.
Ye do mistake me, signors: all my thoughts
To ye are grateful ones. But for your rash
And ill-advised attempt, I had not known
How true the love on which my power is built—
How strong the cause the people trust with me!

Re-enter COUNT GONSALVI.

GONSALVI.

I must demand some escort: for the streets
Are fill'd with people, and unwillingly
Would I shed blood. What! Castrucani here?

CASTRUCCIO.

Ready to give the Count Gonsalvi audience,
And ask, what are the terms he brings from Florence?

GONSALVI.

With these, the representatives of Lucca,
I have arranged our treaty.

CASTRUCCIO.

On what terms?

GONSALVI.

That ye submit yourselves, and pledge your faith
True vassals unto Florence: and each year
Remit your tribute—twenty thousand florins!

CASTRUCCIO.

Tribute and homage! can they sink so low,
Men who have met ye bravely in the field?
Now hear me, Count Gonsalvi: Lucca rather
Would see her walls dismantled, than consent
To yield such base submission!

GONSALVI.

These are her chiefs—in their consent she yields.

CASTRUCCIO

You see that they are silent. By my voice
Does Lucca speak: she would be glad of peace,
An equal, sure, and honourable peace—
To terms like these she has but one reply—defiance.

GONSALVI.

Florence will teach you better in the field!

CASTRUCCIO.

This to your conqueror: not three weeks have pass'd
Since, in the field, we met. I think you found
More service from your spurs than from your swords.

GONSALVI.

'Twas an unlucky chance of war.

CASTRUCCIO.

Not so, my lord; there was a higher cause—
The right against the wrong. Your army came,
A mercenary and a selfish band,
Some urged by false ambition, some for spoil.
No noble motive noble impulse gave:
Ye were aggressors, and ye fought like such.
I tell you, count, with not a third your numbers
I chased your flying hosts within your gates.

GONSALVI.

I came not for a boast but for an answer—
War or submission.

CASTRUCCIO.

War or submission! sad such choice and stern:
Vast is the suffering—great the wrong of war!

But—and all Lucca speaketh in these words—
Rather we take the suffering; and the wrong
Rests on the oppressor's head, than we submit.
Not while one hand can strike on Lucca's side,
Not while one stone is left of Lucca's walls,
Not while one heart beats in our country's cause,
Will Lucca stoop beneath a foreign yoke.
Ye only fight for conquest or for spoil:
We for our homes, our rights, our ancient walls!
The sword is drawn—God be the judge between us!

GONSALVI.

Have ye no other answer?

CASTRUCCIO.

None! Cesario is your escort to the gates.

GONSALVI.

I take your answer—war, then, to the death.—[*Exit.*

2ND NOBLE.

Are ye not rash in this? how weak our state,
Compared with Florence.

CASTRUCCIO.

Twice have we met them in the open field,
Each time they fled before us. Oh! my friends,
If I may call ye such, we are not weak
Who have our own good swords, and urge a war
Just in the sight of heaven. Our weakness lies
In our dissension, in the small base aims
That disunite us from the common cause.
Lucca were strong, had Lucca but one heart!
Why should ye be mine enemies? I seek
Yours in the general good. I stand between

Ye and a people whom ye would oppress.
Know ye not, love has stronger rule than fear?
A country, fill'd with tyrants and with slaves,
What waits upon her history?—crime and shame!
But the free state, where every rank is knit
By general blessings, freedom shared by all,
There is prosperity—there those great names
Whose glory lingers though themselves be gone.
It is not I ye serve, it is your country!—(*Applause.*)

2ND NOBLE (*Aside*).

I see that we must yield, or seem to yield;
He's master now.

CASTRUCCIO.

And for this base submission
To your hereditary enemies,
There is no yoke so galling as the yoke
Foreign invaders place upon your neck!
The heavy and the arbitrary sway
That ye would fix upon your countrymen,
Would soon be on yourselves. Lucca is free;
To keep her so is trusted to your swords!
I march to meet the Florentines to-morrow;
Will ye not follow me for Lucca's sake?

NOBLES.

We will.

CASTRUCCIO.

Now must I forth to thank the citizens.
(*Sees* ARREZI.) The Count Arrezi here!

ARREZI.

I came here as your friend.

CASTRUCCIO.

Then bear but hence my greetings to your daughter.

ARREZI.

My lord, she is much honour'd! (*Shouts without.*)

CASTRUCCIO.

The people are impatient, let us forth:
I am impatient, too, to thank their love.
We will go forth together, and with them
Make common cause. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Apartment in the Arrezi Palace.*

CLARICHA.

(*Seated at an embroidering-frame.*)

The past it is my world: ah! but for that,
How could I bear the present? In the past
Is garner'd all most precious to my soul.
It is not true that love decays or dies
With time or absence: years have pass'd away,
Yet still my dreams are faithful to one thought.
One voice makes secret music in my ear,
Distinct as when it breathed its earliest vow.
Long since hath hope grown faint, but weary never!
Fate may have said that we shall meet no more!
But rather would I live upon the love
Whose only food is memory, than forget,
And ask oblivion for its cold content.

Enter LEONI.

LEONI.

Nay, I must not disturb you : pray resume
Your graceful task.

CLARICHA.

Pardon me, sir.—(*Going—he detains her.*)

LEONI.

'Tis long since I have seen so fair a face,
And cannot part with it so readily.

CLARICHA.

I will announce your coming to my lady.

LEONI.

She knows it, sweet, and will be here anon.
The time will not seem long with those dark eyes
To count the minutes by.

CLARICHA.

You must excuse my stay.

[*Snatches her hand from him—exit.*

LEONI (*Solus*).

Women exaggerate all things—most of all
Our flatteries and their power. Foolish girl!
She might have pass'd my waiting pleasantly.
But soft! here comes my uncle.

Enter ARREZI.

ARREZI.

Welcome, fair nephew, once again to Lucca.

LEONI.

Thanks, my kind kinsman ; but, before I say
A word of greeting, tell me of your news.

ARREZI.

This 'twixt ourselves—I bring the very worst.
Castruccio is again the lord of Lucca.

LEONI.

It cannot be.

ARREZI.

The people rose and freed him from his prison,
Bore him in triumph to the senate-house,
And, once among us, all gave way before him.

LEONI.

What! did ye yield, so many as ye were?

ARREZI.

What could we do? strong as the angry sea,
The people gather'd fiercely at the gates,
And many of the younger nobles lean'd
Towards his side, chafed at the thoughts of peace
Bought by submission to the Florentines.

LEONI (*Aside*).

Cowards and traitors to themselves. (*Aloud.*) And now
What is the course ye mean to follow?

ARREZI.

Our power is broken, and we must submit.

LEONI.

Is it the head of our most noble house
Who names submission to the Castrucani?

ARREZI.

What can we do? he's brave and eloquent.
His sword subdues the Florentines. his tongue
Enchants the people!

LEONI.

What can ye do?—resist.

ARREZI.

What has resulted from our late resistance
But a more firm assurance to his sway?

LEONI.

Fools, that could let a prison stand between
Their enemy and death!

ARREZI.

We must conciliate now.

LEONI.

He is to wed
The fair Bianca.

ARREZI.

We shall share his power.

LEONI.

I like no sharing but the lion's share.
This was not once the temper of our house:
The Castrucani owed their banishment
To us and ours.

ARREZI.

Ah! those were glorious days.
None question'd, then, our rightful sovereignty.

LEONI.

Which half the citizens now laugh to scorn.
As yet I have not been an hour in Lucca,
Yet I can see all things are changed.

ARREZI.

Too true!

LEONI.

Your servants are your masters; where are gone
Your old respect and high authority?

ARREZI.

I do not know the times in which I live,
So much of change lies heavy on each hour!
Castruccio comes to-night—now greet him fair.

LEONI.

What! when he comes a suitor to my cousin?

ARREZI.

Such an alliance will secure us all.

LEONI.

I tell you, count, that it shall never be;
Think upon what you owe your ancient line:
Its feuds are bonds its honour must hold dear.
We hate the Castrucani!

ARREZI.

I have small cause, if you knew all, to love them.

LEONI.

And yet you yield and tamper with Castruccio.

ARREZI.

And once again, I say, what can we do?

LEONI (*Aside*).

He wavers—ancient hatred is too strong
For the new bond of interest and of fear,
But yet I dare not trust him with the scheme
That rises dark and vague upon my mind.
I must think more. (*Aloud.*)—Again, I say, resist!
But wisely, calmly; never should the sword
Flash till it strikes.

ARREZI.

I'll tell you truly, kinsman,
I like not this alliance: it is forced

On us by evil days and evil fortunes.
Now, more than ever, do we need such aid,
For I misdoubt but that Castruccio knows
'Twas not to serve him that I sought the council
When he was prisoner.

LEONI.

Bid him, as you said,
To a gay banquet here, and bid with him
All his chief followers; let us seem friends:
And, if we watch our hour, that hour will come.

ARREZI.

I'll to the Castrucani palace straight,
And urge our welcome. [*Exit.*

LEONI (*Solus*).

And he will come; danger escaped but makes
The brave more daring; and Castruccio's brave.
It is a desperate game that I must try,
And yet our only chance. There's little time,
But haste is the friend of enterprise:
I will but snatch a moment with Bianca,
Then to my task. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Interior of a Church.*

CLARICHA *enters, and makes an Offering of Flowers at the Shrine of the Madonna.*

CLARICHA (*Solus*).

Lady divine, who yet art bound to earth
By the strong tie of sorrows shared, look down

And smile upon the offering which each day
I offer for his sake; if yet on earth,
Weary he wander, strengthen and support;
If thought of me add to his happiness
Keep it alive, and if it be regret,
Let me fade gently, like a pleasant dream—
Sweet, but too faint to rest on memory!
If—but, oh, no, not even in my prayers
Can I name death.—[*Sound of approaching steps.*
Some one approaches, and I cannot bear
My quiet moment broken.—[*She retires up the stage.*

Enter CASTRUCCIO *muffled, and a* FLORENTINE SPY.

CASTRUCCIO.

I understand their plan;
Florence will aid the strongest.

FLORENTINE.

Such is her policy; her wishes take her
Upon the noble's side.

CASTRUCCIO.

It matters not—
One victory more, and I can name my terms;
It is the secret stratagem I seek;
For that I look to thee—henceforth we meet
Within this church; few ever come this way.

FLORENTINE.

To-morrow look for tidings from the camp.

CASTRUCCIO.

I or Cesario will meet you here
At this same hour. Here is your promised gold.

FLORENTINE.

Thanks; I will be secret as the grave. [*Exit.*

CASTRUCCIO.

I loathe the tools that I perforce must use;
For sooner would I hang yon knave than pay him.
Crime takes no shape so base as treachery,
And yonder slave betrays his city's council
For a few ducats; but the time will come,
When, strong in Lucca's cause, I shall not need
Such an unworthy means; the slave and spy
Belong to tyranny, and freedom works
With nobler instruments.

Going out, CLARICHA *returns, they meet face to face, and recognize each other.*

CASTRUCCIO.

My loved, my lost, my beautiful Claricha!

CLARICHA.

Oh! wake me not, Amino, if I dream.

CASTRUCCIO.

Amino! how that name recalls my youth!
But whence art thou? when last I sought our home,
There was no vestige of the humble roof
That was the shelter of our early years.
I only found a heap of blacken'd ashes
O'er which the green weeds had begun to trail.

CLARICHA.

You had not left us but a few sad months,
When, burnt and plunder'd by the Florentines,
Our village 'mid its vineyards lay in ruins;
The aid from Lucca sent, arrived too late

To save our homes; but to the chief Arrezi
I owe my life, and, placed by him, I dwelt
Long with a noble lady of his house,
Who loved me like the children she had lost.

CASTRUCCIO.

The Count Arrezi! strange we never met.

CLARICHA.

I have not been three days in Lucca—death
Left me once more alone in this cold world.
Again the Count Arrezi was my friend,
And placed me with his daughter, who is soon
To wed the Count Castruccio.

CASTRUCCIO.

I am he.

CLARICHA.

Amino!

CASTRUCCIO.

Oh, breathe that name again—let it recall
All that my youth once dream'd of hope and love!
Or rather let me hear that name no more,
It is the death-knell of all happiness.

CLARICHA.

Alas, I dare not question; yet, one word—
Have you forgotten me?

CASTRUCCIO.

Forgotten what was dearest to my soul!

CLARICHA.

Alas, how may that be, if Count Castruccio
And my Amino be the same?

CASTRUCCIO.

Evil and bitter were my early years:

Exiled in childhood, sought for but to slay,
I only re-assumed our ancient name,
When, gathering all the remnants of our cause,
I raised the banner of our line, and came
A conqueror—who but only came to spare.

CLARICHA.

I would that I had earlier known your name.

CASTRUCCIO.

How bitterly I mock the pride that kept
My birth a secret; yet 'twas not all pride,
I plann'd a glad surprise for her I loved;
In the first dawn of my success, I sought
The well-remember'd vineyards.

CLARICHA.

Farewell, Count Castruccio! had I known
The name whose triumphs fill our Italy,
I had not hoped as I have done for years;
But I should still have loved: it does not need
That words should say, the nameless, friendless girl
Is nothing to the Lord of Lucca.

CASTRUCCIO.

Weary and hard has been my path through life;
Its brief success by danger has been bought,
Yet knew I not its bitterness till now.

CLARICHA.

Farewell, my lord.

CASTRUCCIO.

Hear me, Claricha—be yourself my judge—
What Lucca was, let our first years recall:
Years past in war and exile—when the land
Had not one vineyard safe—one hearth secure-

How stands my country now?—at peace within,
The peasant, undisturb'd beneath his vine,
The citizen in safety, high or low,
While our fair banners flout the gates of Florence.
Not for the palace only have I ruled,
But for the green fields and the market place;
Peace dwells beneath the shadow of my power.

CLARICHA.

Ah, me! I know too well how much Castruccio
Has done for Lucca.

CASTRUCCIO.

I have given youth,
And love, and hope, to be her sacrifice.
From the first hour that Lucca own'd my sway,
I only look'd to her prosperity:
The heart went with her that now turns aside;
On one side dost thou stand and happiness,
But on the other, danger, toil, and care.

CLARICHA.

And duty!

CASTRUCCIO.

A heavy duty girdles me around;
Arrezi's daughter has my plighted honour:
For Lucca's sake was the alliance sought,
To bind her father's party to my side.
A darker power than mine impels me on—
For the first time I hesitate, and fain
I would recall my purpose.

CLARICHA.

Not for me;

Look on yon heaven, Castruccio, and think
Of thine own glorious future.

CASTRUCCIO.

Has life no service I could render thee?

CLARICHA.

What is there I could ask of thee but love?

CASTRUCCIO.

I cannot part with thee: I had forgotten
That there were sweet and gentle thoughts in life;
Let me do something for thy sake, my loved one.

CLARICHA.

Oh, death, this is thy agony!

CASTRUCCIO.

The council will have met—I must away;
Who could restrain my followers in their fear
If I were missing? but not yet farewell,
I have so much to say, so much to ask.
We meet again, Claricha; I must seek
At least to be thy friend; we meet again.

CLARICHA.

Alas! why should we meet? it is in vain.

CASTRUCCIO.

I cannot choose, my heart beats quick with joy:
Youth, hope, and tenderness return with thee.

CLARICHA.

For thine own sake, Castruccio, fare-thee-well.

CASTRUCCIO.

Stay yet one moment; if thou didst but know
How faithfully this heart has kept thy name,
Its sad and secret music; years have past

Since the green vineyards heard our youthful vow;
Hurried our parting word, and parting kiss,
But not less sacred. In my first career
Thou wert my hope, my star of enterprise—
When I look'd forward, 'twas to look to thee.

CLARICHA.

And now we meet, and know that we must part,
Unpitying fate! why met we not before?

CASTRUCCIO.

My exile was repeal'd, but ere I sought
My native city, I did seek for thee;
Instead of sunny welcome in thine eyes,
I found but desolation and despair:
Dark night, and its eternal echoes, gave
The only answer when I call'd thy name.

CLARICHA.

Oh! if we had but met.

CASTRUCCIO.

Fate mocks at us; a few brief hours suffice
To stand between us and our happiness,
Thenceforth I had those gentle hopes no more,
That make the spirit gentle where they dwell.
Lucca was then my all—I had no hopes
But for the glory of my native city;
To see her free and prosperous, became
Life's sole great object.

CLARICHA.

Not for my sake shall Lucca's hero pause
Upon his glorious path; not for my sake
Forget life's noblest duties.

CASTRUCCIO.

Thou art more strong than I am—yet not so,
I see thy cheek is pale, thine eye is wet,
I cannot leave thee.

Enter CESARIO *hastily.*

CESARIO.

I pray your pardon, but the need is great;
The late attempt fills all your friends with fear,
Not mine to check their angry eagerness,
Which now is fain to seek thee, sword in hand.

CASTRUCCIO.

To stay is madness now; my brief delay
May be atoned in blood. Love, now farewell.

CESARIO.

I pray you, lady, urge his speed.

CLARICHA.

Farewell! farewell!

CASTRUCCIO.

Meet me again, Claricha, meet me here;
Here, with high Heaven, and the dead around,
Fit for farewell like ours. Sternly I feel
The pressure of my duty to the land,
Whose people are entrusted to my keeping;
But I cannot part with thee, and know so little
Of thy uncall'd-for future.

CESARIO.

Good, my lord.

CASTRUCCIO.

Claricha, most beloved, I dare not stay,
With life on every moment, bid me go.

CLARICHA.

Farewell.

CASTRUCCIO.

We meet to-morrow; every gentle saint
Watch over thee. Farewell.—[*Exeunt.*

CLARICHA. (*Stands looking after him, and then turns suddenly and kneels before the Madonna*).

At least I still may pray for him.—[*Scene closes.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Banquetting Hall opening into a garden, and hung with pictures.*—Servants.—COUNT ARREZI.

ARREZI (*Solus*).

I have but little heart for this gay banquet:
Dangers and fears encompass me around;
I know the Castrucani doubts my faith,
I know Leoni loathes the coming marriage,
Which never will his fiery spirit see
Without a struggle; and with that must come
All that I thought to shun of strife and blood.
Ah! there are moments, when my thoughts have ask'd
The heart that beats with them—can this be life?
This gulf of troubled waters, where the soul,
Like a vex'd bark, is toss'd upon the waves
Of pain and pleasure, by the warring breath
Of passions, like the winds that drive it on,
And only to distraction.—

[*Sees* CLARICHA *coming from the garden.*

Ah! she comes;

The gentle orphan, whose sweet sight more soothes
My troubled soul, than aught in this wide world.
I love her, for I know she needs my love,
And something in her sadness suits with mine.

Enter CLARICHA.

Welcome, my child! but how is this—the tears
Are in thine eyes. Sweet one, why hast thou wept?

CLARICHA.

My spirits are not good, my lord.

ARREZI.

Thou art full young for sadness.

CLARICHA.

Ah, my lord
'Tis not the old alone who know that life
Has but a weary way.

ARREZI.

My gentle child—
For ev'n as a child art thou to me—
Our life has many sorrows: and I think
Most bitterly is sorrow felt in youth.
Age comes and brings indifference: I grieve
Not as I used to grieve—I know the worst
Is but a painful dream that soon must pass.

CLARICHA.

Would I could think so!

ARREZI.

Believe me, maiden, could we read the past
In every heart, we should recoil to find
What weight of misery has been endured.

CLARICHA.

Ah me! unequal are the lots in life.

ARREZI.

More nearly are they balanced than we deem;
The outward life shows not the life within.
I am about to welcome in these walls
The Count Castruccio, and he is received
As the affianced lover of my daughter;
The crowd will only see the pomp and power,
And know not how the irrevocable past
Rises in all its darkness on my soul.
I hate the Castrucani's iron house.

CLARICHA.

Hate them, my lord?

ARREZI.

Is it the sadness in those gentle eyes
That suits my mood? but in thee, my fair child,
Is that which, winning on my confidence,
Soothes the old sorrow which it seems to share.
Since that first hour, when but a trembling girl
I met thee flying from the Florentines,
My heart warm'd to thee as thou wert my own.
Perhaps it is that in thy face and voice
There is a touch that brings again the face,
The voice, that once made heaven on earth to me.
'Twas but a dream of youth!

CLARICHA.

Can such dreams pass?

ARREZI.

Oh, never wholly can they be forgotten:

Good cause have I to hate the Castrucani!
I loved the loveliest lady of their line,
And wedded her in secret. Brief the space
That fate allow'd our moonlit happiness—
We were surprised together. From that hour
A settled darkness hangs upon her fate.
The drug or dagger did their fatal work
So secretly, that not a trace was left.
A dungeon was my share—for three long years
They held me captive, I escaped the third,
But never could I learn my lady's doom!

CLARICHA.

Ah! such a parting well might break the heart.

ARREZI.

Time brings strange chances, when a child of mine
Weds with the Castrucani—but in vain
Age seeks to struggle with its destiny;
I'm worn and weary—all I seem to wish
Is but a little rest before I die.

CLARICHA.

Speak not so mournfully, my own kind friend,
Think how affection girdles you around,
How gratitude puts up its prayer to heaven,
Whene'er the orphan names Arrezi's name.

ARREZI.

My own sweet child, would thou wert truly mine!
I've sadden'd where at first we meant to cheer.
We'll talk of grief no more; I pray you cast
Your eye around, and see that all be set
In fair array. I must now seek Leoni—(*going.*)

I had forgotten what I meant to say—
You and Bianca must be brave to-night.
I bade my pages carry to your chamber
Some toys and gauds I trust will please your fancy.

CLARICHA.

You are too kind.

ARREZI.

Nay, I am only glad
To give so slight a pleasure. [*Exit.*

CLARICHA.

It is in vain—I cannot fix my thoughts
On aught but him. Amino, no, Castruccio!
How have I pray'd for years that we might meet—
We meet, and only meet to part for ever.
I know not what I look upon—all things
Repeat his likeness—I can hear his voice,
Or is it but the beating of my heart?
The Count Leoni here? Let me escape,
I could not bear his idle gallantry.—(*Looks round.*)
This column will conceal me.

Enter the COUNT LEONI, *followed by* ARREZI.

ARREZI.

It is too desperate!

LEONI.

So are our fortunes!
We are the ladders of Castruccio's greatness,
Used, then flung down.

ARREZI.

Nay, we must rise with him.

LEONI.

One of our noble house should scorn such rise;
Ancestral is our hatred, dark with time!
And seal'd on either side with blood. To-day
Cannot undo the work of many years.

ARREZI.

Where are the well-laid schemes of yesterday?

LEONI.

Lost by your own weak fears: he should have died.
Castruccio's only prison is the grave!

ARREZI.

But still to slay him—coming as my guest
In my own halls—

LEONI.

The strong may choose their time,
The weak take opportunity to strike.

ARREZI.

I cannot—dare not.

LEONI.

Dare not, is the word;
I'll dare for both. Now listen, uncle mine;
Bianca is my own betrothed bride!
Castruccio shall not wed her; that alone
Were cause enough to float these halls with blood
He is our house's ancient enemy,
And, but for him, no citizen would dare
Raise hand against the nobles; he must die!

ARREZI.

But yet some fitter time.

LEONI.

The hour for action is the present hour!

Defeat and danger wait upon delay.
Castruccio will be here to-night, unarm'd,
His surest friends beside him; they will fall,
None to avenge. Our friends are all prepared;
A secret band of Florentines now lie
In ambush by the city's western gate,
Whose keeper I have gain'd. I haste to seek them
Bearing the orders of the Count Gonsalvi,
Who'll meet them at the gate and lead them on.
Castruccio slain—the people overawed,
Henceforth our triumph is secure.

ARREZI.

It will be bought too dearly.

LEONI.

Danger will only heighten our success.

ARREZI.

'Tis not the danger, 'tis the treachery.

LEONI.

I've heard the treachery of the Castrucani
Gave you three years of prison in your youth.

ARREZI.

Do not recall that bitter time again.

LEONI.

I must recall its memory—let it cry
For vengeance at our hands. I will away;
Short time is mine to reach the Florentines,
And yet return to grace the festival:
My entrance at the banquet is the signal!

ARREZI.

Castruccio may miss you from the halls
Whose heir should be the first to bid him welcome!

LEONI.

A little colouring gives truth to falsehood,
Tell him I'm jealous of Bianca's smile.

ARREZI.

But——

LEONI.

Buts are the stumbling-blocks of enterprise,
We will not have them.

ARREZI.

The risk is fearful—do not think Castruccio
Will yield without a struggle. How can I
Stand by and see him murder'd?

LEONI.

Out on such scruples! Hear me, Count Arrezi!
Go to Castruccio's feet, and tell him all;
Give up your kinsmen and your ancient friends,
And henceforth be his vassal. For ourselves,
We are prepared to die, though not prepared
To perish by your act.

ARREZI.

You know no death could tempt me to betray you.

LEONI.

You have your choice—his life or ours!

ARREZI.

Leoni, I am now a man in years,
Broken and wayworn, and I lack the force
To lead or stem the tide of your fierce spirits;
On either hand is death!

LEONI.

That of your friends and foes is at your choice.

ARREZI.

I have no choice.

LEONI.

Then, neither can you be responsible.
But now I must away—time hurries on,
One parting word—be calm and resolute. [*Exit.*

ARREZI.

Hear me one moment more! (*Follows him.*)

CLARICHA (*Coming forward*).

Thank God, I have heard all! oh, give me strength
To fly and save him! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A small Chamber looking to the Street.*

Enter CLARICHA, *hastily.*

CLARICHA.

All egress is forbidden from the palace,
They will not let me forth, and he must die!
I must behold him murder'd in my sight!
Can I not watch, when first he comes, and speak
At once my words of warning in his ear?
Too late, the armed traitors will be nigh:
Can I not save him? I, who would lay down
My life to save him? Pitying heaven, look down
And aid me in this hopeless misery. (*After a pause.*)
These windows look upon the street—a scroll
Might save him yet—it is a desperate chance!
Still, if it reach his hand, he were in safety.
(*She approaches the table, and writes.*)

Be still, thou coward hand! thou shalt not tremble.
(*She writes.*)
'Tis done—these few brief words suffice
To warn Castruccio of the coming danger.
(*She folds the letter.*)
Holy Madonna, have it in thy care!
(*She attempts to throw it out, the wind blows it back again.*)
'Tis too light—'twill never reach the street;
(*She looks anxiously round.*)
It should be heavy—heavy as my heart!
Oh, nothing!—nothing, if I had but here
One of those daggers soon to drink his blood!
(*Suddenly recollecting, she puts her hand to her throat.*)
'Tis here, the chain I have from childhood worn!
My only relic of the unknown past.
But let it go—it will weigh down the scroll—
(*She makes up the packet.*)
Now heav'n speed it that it reach Castruccio!
(*She flings it from the window.*)
It falls—I see it lying in the street.
Now all depends on who may find it first.
Star of his glorious hour, send thou some friend!
Let but a noble pass, and he is lost!
A common citizen draws near the spot;
He sees the packet—takes it—reads the name,
And hurries to the Castrucani palace.
I know yon street leads straight unto its gates;
Oh God, I thank thee!
(*Sinks exhausted by the window: the scene closes.*)

SCENE III.—*A Hall in one of the Palaces.*

LEONI, *and several* NOBLES.

1ST NOBLE.

I would you had been with us yesterday.

LEONI.

To-day will serve us better; for to-day
Has yesterday's experience.

1ST NOBLE.

We were wrong
To trust the people and the light of day;
Now secret night is round our enterprise,
And we will be as secret.

LEONI.

All now rests
Upon your own good swords and with yourselves.

2ND NOBLE.

If that the matter rested with my sword
I were content—that were a soldier's part.
Midnight assassins are we now!

LEONI.

Actions are ever judged by their success;
To-morrow sees us paramount in Lucca;
The doom to-night dealt on the Castrucani
Will then be rightful justice

1ST NOBLE.

We have no choice: it is his fall or ours,
And I, for one, care little if my sword
Or if my dagger end an enemy.

LEONI.

We are degraded by the Castrucani;
Our order has not left one privilege
Beyond the meanest citizen.

2ND NOBLE.

He talks, too, of dismissing our retainers.

LEONI.

'Tis the old fable of the lion's claws,
But we must re-assert our ancient rule;
Assert it now or never, for I know
The emperor's envoys are upon their way
To own the Castrucani Lord of Lucca,
But they must find us masters!

1ST NOBLE.

Your entrance at the banquet is our signal?

LEONI.

Yes, and I ask one favour; let my dagger
Be that which strikes Castruccio!

ALL.

Agreed!

LEONI.

Our time is precious; to your care, Count Ludolph,
I will commend my uncle: he is old,
And weak, and fearful—see he falter not.
You, Count Rinaldo, have our followers arm'd,
And meet me secret in the cypress-grove;
I'll wait there, coming from the Florentines.
Our forces and their band must join at once;
This fix'd, we'll seek the banquet-room together.
My welcome to Castruccio is my dagger!

1ST NOBLE.

One cup of wine, Leoni, ere you go.

LEONI.

I have not time—yet stay—we'll drink one pledge.

(*They pour out wine; each takes a goblet.*)

Death to the Castrucani!

ALL.

Death to the Castrucani!

LEONI.

And now away—away—for life and death
Is on the hour! [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The same Hall as before, but now illuminated, hung with Pictures, &c.*

COUNT ARREZI, BIANCA, CLARICHA, GUESTS, &c.

CLARICHA *anxiously watching the groups as they enter.*

ARREZI.

Welcome, my friends!

(*After two or three greetings.*)

(*Aside.*) We cannot now recede, they come prepared.

CLARICHA (*Aside*).

He comes not!

1ST NOBLE.

You've spared, good count, no cost upon your banquet.

(*Aside.*) Wear not that moody brow, to-night is ours.

ARREZI (*Aside.*)

Alas! that this must be.—(*Aloud.*)—The count is late.

1ST NOBLE.

We're used to wait the Count Castruccio's pleasure.

CLARICHA (*Aside*).

Perhaps he may not come!

ARREZI.

Fair ladies, will you dance? (*A dance.*)

CLARICHA (*Aside*).

Each moment gives me hope he may not come.

ARREZI.

You stand apart; will you not dance my child?

CLARICHA.

I am not well. (*Aside.*)—Oh, Heaven, he comes!

Enter CASTRUCCIO, CESARIO, *and* ATTENDANTS.

ARREZI.

Welcome, my noble guest!

CLARICHA (*Aside*).

The chain is round his neck.

CASTRUCCIO.

Thanks for your courtesy. The fair Bianca!

BIANCA.

You're welcome, signor.

1ST NOBLE (*Aside*).

The victim, now, is safe within our toils!

ARREZI.

You're late, my lord.

CASTRUCCIO.

I pray your pardon, 'twas no fault of mine!

1ST NOBLE.

It was our pride and pleasure to expect.

CLARICHA (*Aside*).

I see he is prepared; his eagle eye
Flashes, as, when a boy, he spoke of danger.

Enter SERVANT.

The banquet waits, my lord.

ARREZI (*Aside*).

There can be no delay,

1ST NOBLE (*Aside*).

And no misgiving!

ARREZI.

Our banquet's ready. Please you, Count Castruccio,
To lead Bianca?

CASTRUCCIO.

Your pardon, lady, for a brief delay;
Let me look round this hall, I knew it not.

ARREZI.

'Tis never open'd but when some high guest
Honours us with his presence; and we ask
Our ancestors to aid us in his greeting.

CASTRUCCIO.

I like the custom. It is from the dead
The living must their noblest lessons learn;
The dead are as the stars that light the past:
We see how time has honoured them, and hope
Ourselves for equal honour.

1ST NOBLE.

True my good lord. (*Aside to* ARREZI.)
Why dost thou look so scared?

CASTRUCCIO.

The name of every noble ancestor's

A bond upon the soul against disgrace!
'Tis no vain pride that looketh to their honours,
And taketh thence a high security
That we prove not unworthy of such names.

ARREZI (*Aside*).

I cannot bear this. (*Aloud.*) The banquet waits!

CASTRUCCIO.

A little while, I pray you, let it wait.
I like this gallery much—our history,
Our Lucca's history, is on its walls;
Her noblest, and her bravest, and her best,
Keep the time-honour'd life of memory.
Now, if a man had plann'd some low vile deed,
He dared not act it here.

1ST NOBLE (*Aside*).

Can he suspect? (*Aloud.*) Some men are resolute.

CASTRUCCIO.

Yonder is one who reign'd our doge in Lucca;
'Tis now some fifty years—I know the face.
The public monument the public raised
In gratitude for a long life of service.
His statue looks upon the town he ruled,
An honour unto both. It is the past
Redeems the present, and that bids us look
To the dim future with a lofty hope.
Cold and unworthy were the actual hours,
If they look'd only to themselves; but life
Is conscious of its immortality,
Urged by high duty—animate by power;
The present, in the shadow of the past,

Learns what it owes the future.
The sage, the hero, leave their great example
Heroic guides upon a glorious path;
They are the lights by which we shape our course,
Only by looking up can we see Heav'n.

1ST NOBLE.

You're eloquent, my lord!

ARREZI (*Aside*).

I'll try to save him, and must see Leoni.
(*Aloud.*) Our guests await your pleasure.

CASTRUCCIO.

I pray their pardon: but who is yon knight
Clad in white armour?

ARREZI.

Our house's chiefest honour; when the Moors
Made him a prisoner, on his plighted word,
So high they held the Count Vitelli's name,
They let him seek his native land to raise
The ransom which they set. He found his lands
Impoverish'd like the state, and could not raise
The heavy sum required. In vain 'twas urged
Small faith was needed with the Infidel;
But he return'd, taking his chains again,
And died a captive.

CASTRUCCIO.

And, in the presence of this noble knight,
Who looks in visible scorn upon ye now,
Your ancestor, Arrezi, have you plann'd
To violate all hospitable rites!

ARREZI.

Count Castruccio!

CASTRUCCIO.

A cowardly assassin; but in vain.

(*He stamps; his Guard comes in.*)

1ST NOBLE.

We sell our lives full dearly!

(*Springs at* CASTRUCCIO, *who strikes his sword from his hand.*)

CASTRUCCIO.

Take them to prison; ladies, by your leave,
This is no place for you. (*Addressing one of them.*)
Madam, I give the Count Arrezi's daughter
To your kind charge and honourable keeping;
We never meet again! [*Exeunt.*

CLARICHA *comes forward.*

CASTRUCCIO (*Not knowing her*).

Lady, I crave your absence.

CLARICHA.

I only stay to ask my chain again.

CASTRUCCIO (*Recognising her*).

Your chain! My own Claricha, have you been
Lucca's good angel—sweet preserver, mine!
Take back your chain, and, with it, take my heart
And its entire allegiance. Oh! sweet love,
This is no time to pour my heart in words;
Yet happiness must ask a moment's space.
Saved, and by thee!

CLARICHA.

Ah! would I not lay down my life for thine?

CASTRUCCIO.

Like a good angel's gift I hold the life

Which thou hast rescued; it must be for good:
Life's sweetest hopes return again with thee.
Mine once again—my own, long lost Claricha!
This very evening I reproach'd my fate;
To meet thee still the beautiful, the true,
And yet resign thee, was too hard a task!
I question'd with my honour, and I falter'd
In the stern path of right: but I am now
So happy, my Claricha!

CLARICHA.

Would I might ever make thy happiness!

CASTRUCCIO.

One word—where does my sweet one make her home?

CLARICHA.

With Count Arrezi.

CASTRUCCIO.

With mine enemy!

CLARICHA.

No longer such; henceforward bound to thee
By a free pardon.

CASTRUCCIO.

I cannot pardon him.

CLARICHA.

Not pardon him, Castruccio, for my sake?

CASTRUCCIO.

I cannot pardon him for Lucca's sake!

CLARICHA.

One moment hear me: oh! Castruccio, thi
How kind the count has been; my one
An orphan—pity was my only claim;

It was enough with him—I owe him all
Of fond affection's care; but for that care
I were not here to kneel and ask for mercy.

CASTRUCCIO.

Kneel not to me; ah! listen, dearest mine!

CLARICHA.

Will you not pay my debt of gratitude?

CASTRUCCIO.

Ask for my life, Claricha, it is thine!
But ask not for the lives which others trust
Safe to my charge; think not that I refuse
Arrezi's life because he sought for mine;
I have no anger for my private wrong:
But there are those in Lucca who need warning,
And they shall have it. With the traitor's head
A thousand plots fall harmless from the scaffold.

CLARICHA.

Nothing disarms an enemy like pardon.

CASTRUCCIO.

Not when they think the pardon wrung from fear.
Ancient oppression—present treachery—
Alike demand example. At our gates
Gather the foreign foe; they must not hope
For aid within our walls: I have long tried
A gentle rule of patience—'tis no more.
Plead not with those sad eyes, the count must die!

CLARICHA.

I do implore you by our ancient love!

CASTRUCCIO.

Oh! do not think that when I take this hand
I link it to a calm and happy lot;

You will share with me sacrifice and pain.
For power, it is an awful thing, and stands
Girt by stern duties. Not to thy sweet tears
May I yield up one staid and solemn purpose;
Once have I pardon'd: but, to pardon twice,
Were weakness, and not mercy. He must die!

CLARICHA.

Castruccio!

CASTRUCCIO.

Not where my heart has chosen must it find
Unrest and womanish complaint; weep, love,
Kindly and natural tears; but still remember
Lucca has my first duty. Cesario, wait.
Farewell, love! within a few short hours
We'll meet again; when I shall ask from thee
More justice to mine act. [*Exit.*

CLARICHA.

It is my hand has slain him; he, my friend,
My kind—my only friend. Is there no hope?
I did not urge him earnestly enough—
I did not tell him he would lose my love
Unless he heard my desperate pray'rs for mercy.
Oh! never shall I know a quiet hour
Again in life, unless Arrezi live;
His memory will haunt me like a ghost,
Pale and perpetual at my side, with eyes
That never turn aside their sad reproach.
I'll after him, and wring a slow consent.

CESARIO.

Your pardon, lady; do not seek the count,

Let his just anger cool; think you how false,
How vile has been Arrezi's part to-night!
With flattering words he pray'd Castruccio's presence,
Made his own child the lure, yet, in his heart,
Lurk'd the assassin, and he plann'd to make
His home—his sacred home—the place for murder!

CLARICHA.

It is too true—but he was urged by others.

CESARIO.

Lady, it does not justify our crime,
Saying that others prompted us to sin.

CLARICHA.

Alas! alas! I cannot think of him
But as he was to me—a kind old man,
The only friend my orphan girlhood knew.
Oh! I must see him; I must kneel and weep
Before his feet—he cannot pardon me—
Yet let me ask forgiveness. Gentle youth,
Conduct me to the prison.

CESARIO.

'Twill need an order to allow your entrance.

CLARICHA.

Seek ye Castruccio; he will not refuse,
And I, meanwhile, must weep and pray. Oh! Fate,
How thou dost mock us! I have met Castruccio,
The prayer of many years has been fulfill'd;
We love with that true love we vow'd at parting,
Yet my full heart sinks down with misery.
My kind—my only friend—oh! gentle youth,
Haste, for sweet pity's sake. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Part of a Garden.* LEONI *pacing backwards and forwards.*

LEONI.

There is no cloud upon the placid sky,
There is no motion in the drooping leaves;
I neither like this waiting nor this stillness.
Too much the rest of this still night contrasts
The unrest that is feverish in my soul!
The midnight, with its pale and mournful moon,
That wanders, like an orphan, through the heavens,
Companionless, with its dark boughs, that seem
Still as the heavy shadows which they fling,
This hour is not for enterprise. The heart
Mocks its own projects and its own designs,
So little, with eternal night around,
So worthless, gazing on those distant worlds.
Why, what vain fantasies are these to cross
My mind at such a time! but we are toys
E'en to ourselves. Where can Rinaldo stay?
The banquet hour is past—Ah! here he comes.

Enter 2ND NOBLE *hastily.*

You come full late, my lord

2ND NOBLE.

I come too soon;
Despair and danger are my comrades here!

LEONI.

What can you mean?

2ND NOBLE.

Mean? that Castruccio's friend

Has stood him in good stead; he came prepared,
Knowing the welcome that he was to meet.
Your uncle and his friends are now in prison,
Condemn'd to death.

LEONI.

The Count Arrezi prisoner!

2ND NOBLE.

Aye—and his shadow falls upon his grave,
He stands so near to it. Just now I pass'd
Beside the market-place; the midnight rang
With the loud hammer's blow, and with the saw
Grating its sullen pathway through the wood
Which is to raise the scaffold for to-morrow.
Arrezi there will be the first to die.

LEONI.

Not if my life can ransom his. 'Twas I
Who urged the old man on—with sneer and threat
I silenced his misgivings.

2ND NOBLE.

What can we do?

LEONI.

Rather than let that old man die, I'd kneel
Before the Castrucani, and give up
My head as fitting ransom.

2ND NOBLE.

You would but only add another victim.
We have no choice but flight.

LEONI.

I will not fly,
Though I but stay'd to share Arrezi's scaffold.

2ND NOBLE.

Live for revenge—a better hour may come.

LEONI.

Revenge is all too distant; I will save
Or perish!

2ND NOBLE.

I tell you all is known; what can avail
A single arm?

LEONI.

'Tis to that single arm that I must trust.
There yet remains one sole—one desperate chance—
The risk is mine. (*Drawing his dagger.*) This blade has stood, ere now,
My certain friend. (*Sheathing it.*)—I'll trust to it again.

2ND NOBLE.

Castruccio's guards are gather'd round his palace;
And, if some cunning tale could win your entrance,
You'd perish, ev'n as you struck the blow.
A hundred swords would straight avenge his death.

LEONI.

I'd brave them all, Rinaldo, in such cause;
But mine's a far more subtle stratagem.

2ND NOBLE.

Your stratagems have not avail'd us much.

LEONI.

The chances of the game have turn'd against us,
And I will pay the forfeit with my head,
Unless I turn them yet again.

2ND NOBLE.

There's something in your courage raises mine;
I'll follow you.

LEONI.

That suits not with my scheme : take you this ring,
And hurry with it to the Florentines,
Who lay in ambush near the ruin'd tower ;
Hasten their march ; I did not wish their aid
Until our party muster'd in its strength :
But now, our life and death hangs on their speed.
Hence, good Rinaldo.

2ND NOBLE.

Not till I know your purpose for yourself.
Half of the danger is my proper share.

LEONI.

On my right hand alone I must rely.
You may remember, in our boyish days
My father held the Castrucani palace—
The Castrucani were themselves in exile;
I know each turn and winding—there was one,
A secret passage leading to the city,
And from the very room which now Castruccio
Makes his own private chamber—leave that way,
And, Fortune, I will worship thee again.

2ND NOBLE.

Methinks that Fortune owes us some amends
For past ill-favour.

LEONI.

We must away ; each moment that we lose
Brings my old kinsman nearer to the scaffold.
Off to the Florentines ! Now life and death
Hang on an hour's chance. [*Exeunt different ways.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Prison.*

ARREZI *and the* CONFESSOR.

ARREZI.

Thou bring'st my youth again; thou who didst link
Her faith to mine—the lost and the beloved.
Fateful to me has been thy ministering;
It has been thine, oh! ancient priest, to bless
My marriage and my scaffold!

CONFESSOR.

Not on the past, my son, fix thou thy thoughts,
But on the solemn future!

ARREZI.

I cannot choose: I sought thee out for years.
Give me to know her fate—my secret bride—
Soon lost, but long beloved—and I will turn
From thee to thy companion—death!

CONFESSOR.

When the proud Castrucani forced thy bride

To secret banishment, and made thee prisoner,
Chance brought me to the village, and I watch'd
Above her and her child—

ARREZI.

Her child!

CONFESSOR.

It was two years before the mother died;
With her last breath she gave her to my charge.

ARREZI.

What of the orphan?

CONFESSOR.

For years I saw her grow in loveliness,
And deem'd her happy in her lowly state;
For Lucca was distracted with the wars
Her nobles kept among themselves.

ARREZI.

I dread—yet still must ask—does my child live?

CONFESSOR.

But that it breaks a link with this sad world,
My heart would fail me—no, the girl is dead!
She had just sprung to blooming womanhood,
When Heaven claim'd its own. The Florentines
Burnt Arola, the village where she dwelt;
Not one escaped to tell the tale of death!

ARREZI.

Oh, subtle force of nature's secret love!
That child, although I knew her not for mine,
Has been my care; I have reproach'd myself
That more my heart drew to her than Bianca:
Our house almost enforced my second marriage.

I wedded with a lady cold and proud,
Who left her likeness to her child—Bianca
Ne'er sought, ne'er won affection like Claricha;
Would I might bless her ere I die.

CONFESSOR.

Alas! my son, think not on human ties.

Enter CLARICHA.

ARREZI.

And hast thou sought me out, my own sweet child?
Come to your father's heart! 'twas Heaven and nature
That made me love thee, ere I knew thy right
To claim a parent's love. How hard it is
To only know thee in this last sad hour!
Shrink not away, my child—I am thy father!

CLARICHA.

My father!

CONFESSOR.

She wears the very chain around her neck
Placed by her dying mother. Start not thus,
But kneel and ask a father's latest blessing.

CLARICHA.

Mercy—mercy.

ARREZI.

In evil times we meet; but still, my child,
Come to my heart—Claricha, let me bless thee!

CLARICHA.

Curse me—your blessing sinks me to the earth:
Curse me—and in me curse your murderer!

ARREZI.

Cease these wild words, you know not what you say.

CLARICHA.

I know too well: I gave the Count Castruccio
The tidings of his danger.

ARREZI.

You told Castruccio!

CONFESSOR.

Unhappy girl!

CLARICHA.

I told Castruccio—in our early youth
We met and loved; the burning of our village
Lost us each other's trace; again we met—
That very day I overheard your scheme,
And gave him warning.

ARREZI.

I cannot blame thee.

CLARICHA.

He loves me—oh! he cannot let me die—
Die with a parent's blood upon my soul!
He did not know of this—yes, there is hope.

ARREZI.

Hope!

CLARICHA.

My father—let me call thee by that name—
My father, bless me—bless thy wretched child!
Oh, try to say one word of comfort to me!
I come to seek thy pardon. (*Kneels.*)

ARREZI.

I blame our evil destiny, and feel
'Tis my own crime has brought down Heaven's vengeance;

I dare not say I pardon thee, Claricha,
But take thy father's blessing; my last prayer
Shall be for thee!

CLARICHA.

Either I bring thy pardon, or I die;
I seek Castruccio: never will I rise
From kneeling at his feet, until I win
Forgiveness for my father. Once, again,
I pray thee bless me.

ARREZI.

Come to my heart? (*They embrace.*)

CLARICHA.

Now, pitying Heaven assist me.—[*Exit.*

CONFESSOR.

Let us now seek the inner cell, and pray.

ARREZI.

She must succeed; I feel
My heart beat quick with hope.—I follow thee.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—CASTRUCCIO *alone in his Chamber, writing.*

CASTRUCCIO.

There is a heavy weight upon my heart
That I would fling aside, yet cannot fling;
But that I hold all such presentments vain,
I should think there was evil on this hour.
Yet where should be the evil? yonder star
That brings the golden promise of the day,
Is, as my fortunes, rising to their noon.
Victory bears my crimson banner onwards;

Love nestles in its shadow; and, subdued,
Mine enemies are prostrate at my feet.
Bear witness, Lucca! in this silent hour,
That my first thought is thine; I have not ask'd
A transitory name for thee or me;
My conquests have but sought to keep our gates
Steadfast against a foreign foe; within
Have I kept order and security.
The iron power, made selfish by the few,
Have I subdued, and temper'd in its use.
The citizens have learnt to know their strength,
And in that strength lies freedom.

(*The panel at the back begins to open, and* LEONI *appears. He advances towards* CASTRUCCIO, *who starts, but instantly composes himself, and appears occupied by the papers on the table.*)

CASTRUCCIO (*Aside*).

I hear the secret lock I thought none knew
Turn in the panel, and I hear a step;
It is too stealthy for a friendly one—
Let me be on my guard—it comes more near.
I see a shadow darken on the ground:
There is a dagger in the hand. I'll seem
Busy among these letters while I watch.

(LEONI *attempts to stab him, but* CASTRUCCIO *springs up, and snatches the dagger.*)

CASTRUCCIO.

The Count Leoni turn'd assassin?

(*Throws down the dagger.*)

LEONI.

Now curses on the worthless hand that fail'd
With life and honour trusted to its strength!

CASTRUCCIO.

Honour! that is no word for lip of thine—
A coward murderer in the silent night.
Does not thy noble name cry shame upon thee?

LEONI.

It cries for vengeance!

CASTRUCCIO.

What cause hast thou to be my enemy?

LEONI.

An hundred years our houses have been foes;
To that I add my individual hate.
There is no path of fortune where thy step
Has not cross'd mine; in war, ambition, love,
Still hast thou been my rival! call thy guards,
Tyrant! but, ere they come, I'll try my sword.

CASTRUCCIO.

I'll call no other guard than my right hand.

(*They fight.—As he disarms* LEONI, CESARIO *and the Attendants rush in.*)

CASTRUCCIO.

Bear hence the traitor! you are just in time.

CESARIO.

He bleeds to death.

LEONI.

But yet with strength enough
For hatred and defiance; 'tis in vain—
Fate is against me—curse the hand and sword

That have betray'd me in my utmost need!
Yet hark, Castruccio! thou hast many foes—
Dagger and cup are armed against thy life!
And with my dying breath I bid them speed.
But I am dizzy—no—I dare not leave
Word for my kind old kinsman or Bianca:
Now can I neither save, nor yet revenge.

CESARIO.

Die with more christian words upon your lips,
For the dear sake of thy immortal soul!

LEONI (*springing up for a moment*).

I'll peril it on my last word—I hate him! (*Dies.*)

CASTRUCCIO.

Bear him away, and instantly prepare
Arrezi's scaffold; I will make my power
Show itself fearful: they must learn my strength.

[*Exeunt Attendants bearing the body.*

CESARIO.

Can you be hurt my lord? you look so pale.

CASTRUCCIO.

I am more sad than is my wont, Cesario!
My hand has slain yon traitor, but he once
Was my familiar friend—yet scarce my friend,
For friendship asks as much as love—of faith—
Of mingling qualities and confidence;
Friends, then, we were not, but such gay companions
As are remember'd pleasant in our age;
They wear the freshness of our youth about them,
And bring back hours untramell'd by a care!
Many a midnight have we pass'd together

In glad carousal, when the purple cup
Gave its own gaiety; we've fought together,
'Neath the same banner was our earliest field!
We've sat beside the watch-fire half the night,
Talking of friends and of our native city,
Yet yonder doth he lie, slain by my hand!

CESARIO.

Better ten thousand perish'd such as he,
Than peril life so dear as your's to Lucca.

CASTRUCCIO.

Lucca—that is the watchword of my heart!
My native city! you are young, Cesario,
And do not know with how intense a love
The exile clingeth to his mother earth.
I was an exile once—and Lucca rose
Each night more beautiful among my dreams;
Each day a deeper longing seized my soul
To see her walls once more; at length I came,
And found disorder, tyranny and death!
It matters not to tell you of my youth;
Enough, it left me with no home-affection,
None of those gentler ties that fill the thoughts
Of other men—my country was my all!
My hopes, my fears, my future were for Lucca.

CESARIO.

And you have made our Lucca what she is,
Peace in her streets, and victory at her gates.

CASTRUCCIO.

I know my power—alas! I also know
Power is a sad and solitary thing;

It cuts you off from old companionship,
It needeth iron heart and iron eye,
For its resolves are terrible, when life
Waits on your word, and when you know one breath—
One little breath—takes what it cannot give!
I yield the Count Arrezi to the axe,
But have no word that could recall the blow!

CESARIO.

His doom is just!

CASTRUCCIO.

And needful; vain, indeed, my present mood—
Power must submit to its dark comrade—death!

Attendant enters.

A lady craves a moment's speech, my lord.

CASTRUCCIO.

Let her approach: leave us awhile, Cesario.

[*Exeunt.*

I know the step:—(*Enter* CLARICHA)—my sweet lady here,
What would she ask?

CLARICHA.

What thou hast once denied,
A pardon for Arrezi.

CASTRUCCIO.

Let me entreat thy silence—grieve me not
With useless prayers I may not—dare not grant;
Thy hand is cold—your lip is white—sweet love,
For my sake, wear not such wild wretchedness.

CLARICHA.

You cannot dream what misery brings me to you;

Hear me: it is my father's life I seek—
My father's!

CASTRUCCIO.

What does this mean?

CLARICHA.

You could not leave a crime upon my soul
So terrible! Arrezi is my parent!

CASTRUCCIO.

Your parent! How is this?

CLARICHA.

Secret he wedded one of your proud line
Who parted them, and never till this hour
Knew he his wife, nor yet his orphan's fate.
I am that wretched child!

CASTRUCCIO.

Can this be true?

CLARICHA.

Oh! do not cruelly waste time in doubt,
But let my agony attest the truth;
His life—my life—now hang upon a word.
Be merciful, Castruccio! speak that word,
Or see me die before you!

CASTRUCCIO.

There is no doubt?

CLARICHA.

None—none! Now, by our love, I do implore you!
He was my benefactor and my friend—
He is my father!

CASTRUCCIO.

I cannot let her hand—her innocent hand—

Redden for ever with a parent's blood!
Nature, thy ties are sacred, and I yield.
Haste with my signet; love, your father lives,
And you shall be his hostage.

CLARICHA.

Let my haste thank you. Oh! my noble lord,
Long years of happiness reward this pardon! [*Exit.*

Tumult without. CESARIO *and others rush in.*

CESARIO.

My lord, some treachery has been at work.
Through the west gate the Florentines have won
Their secret entrance, and the Count Gonsalvi
Raises his war-cry in our streets.

CASTRUCCIO.

'Tis well;
Long have I sought to meet him face to face,
And now a single blow may end the war.

SCENE III.—*The Market-place. Citizens, &c. Sound of tumult, and a bell tolling in the distance.*

1ST CITIZEN.

They fly before Castruccio; but a band,
With Count Gonsalvi, keep the western gate.

2ND CITIZEN.

They will not keep it long; the Florentines
Know our Castruccio.

1ST CITIZEN.

Did the prisoner pass
While I was gone?

2ND CITIZEN.

The moment that you left;
I wait to see the body brought this way.

1ST CITIZEN.

Lo! where they come.

(*The crowd press together; and, as the body, covered on a bier, is brought in on one side,* CLARICHA *enters at the other. The bearers set down the body.*)

CLARICHA.

I cannot urge my way—in Heaven's name,
I pray you, let me pass.

1ST CITIZEN.

Rest you a little while, poor child, beside me:
You cannot pierce the crowd.

CLARICHA.

I must go on; oh, for your parents' sake
Make but a little way!

1ST CITIZEN.

The crowd will soon disperse—they pause to gaze
On Count Arrezi.

CLARICHA.

Help me—I am his child—I bring his pardon.
Now, in your children's—in your fathers' name—
Let me pass on.

1ST CITIZEN.

It is too late.

(CLARICHA *springs forward with a shriek, the crowd give way, and she reaches the bier.*)

CLARICHA.

Who lies beneath that mantle?

OFFICER.

The traitor, Count Arrezi.

(CLARICHA *drops by the bier. Flourish of trumpets, acclamations.*)

Enter CASTRUCCIO, GONSALVI, *Florentine prisoners, Soldiers, &c.*

GONSALVI (*offering his sword to* CASTRUCCIO).

Thus I yield up my sword as vanquish'd twice;
Once by your arm, more by your courtesy.

CASTRUCCIO.

Keep it, my lord; and with it take your freedom:
We only ask of victory for peace.

Enter CESARIO.

CESARIO.

The envoys of the emperor await
Your leisure, to acknowledge you the lord
Of Lucca.

CASTRUCCIO.

Then Lucca's freedom is assured. High Heaven
I thank thee! (*Addressing the crowd.*) My friends,
Not on a day of victory and peace,
Shall justice sternly ask its penalty
Freely ye will forgive your enemies.
Last night's conspirators I pardon here—
Be they set free.

OFFICER.

That has been done by death!
There lies the Count Arrezi.

(*The crowd opens, and* CLARICHA *is seen lying by the bier.*)

CASTRUCCIO.

Oh, miserable mockery of fate!
Look up, Claricha. (*She starts at his voice.*)

CLARICHA.

His voice—ah! let it wake me from my dream.
I've had a fearful dream—Castruccio mine—
But I am safe, thus nestled in thine arms!

CASTRUCCIO (*attempting to bear her away*).

Come with me, love—this is no place for thee.

CLARICHA (*springing from him*).

Why am I here, and wherefore is this crowd?
There's fear in every face—they look on me
With pity or with horror, and your eyes
Are not familiar—ah! you turn aside—
Speak to me—smile as you once did, Castruccio—
Still do you turn away—what have I done?
There are too many here—I cannot ask you—
A strange confusion mixes up my thoughts,
And at my heart there is a faint sick pain.

CASTRUCCIO.

Lean on me, love.

CLARICHA (*looking towards the bier*).

Who are those men—those dark and fearful men?
What do the black folds of yon mantle hide?

I seem as I had look'd on them before;
There is a weight upon my struggling soul—
'Tis blood—my father's blood—
It is my father murder'd by his child!

(*Sinks in* CASTRUCCIO'S *arms.*)

GONSALVI.

Give way, the lady faints!

CASTRUCCIO.

I tell you it is death—look up, my love!
Silence those trumpets; ah! she doth not hear.
Claricha—my Claricha—so long lost,
So lately found—youth—joy and hope are gone!
Gone, my pale beauty—we shall love no more!

CESARIO.

Oh, come, my lord, all Lucca sees your tears!

CASTRUCCIO.

Lucca should be their witness; for her sake—
For my fair country's sake—I have kept down
Natural emotions, young and cheerful thoughts,
Yet were they warm and eager at my heart.
With her they perish! Fate has claim'd the last,
Cruel and terrible the sacrifice!
All but my country shares Claricha's grave—

(*Raising her in his arms.*)

This, Lucca, is my latest offering!

The Curtain drops.

END OF THE TRAGEDY.

THE

FEMALE PORTRAIT GALLERY.

THE

FEMALE PORTRAIT GALLERY.

WAVERLEY.

No. 1.—FLORA MAC IVOR.

THE time immediately preceding that of Sir Walter Scott may be likened to the thirty years' drought in Cyprus, during which, as an old historian says, the earth had neither green nor bloom, and the heavens seemed made of brass. The brilliant age of Pope, the wittiest in our language, had left only a cold reflection—poetry was no more, and with it had perished the animating influence it exercises over prose. The fictions put forth were of the lowest order. A castle, a ghost, an improbable villain, an impossible hero, a heroine and a harp, were the joint-stock of romances; while novels of manners were, if they could be so, still less like real life. Nothing could be more insipid than the rakes reformed in the third volume, unless it were the ladies, all loveliness and

ill-luck. Inventions lacked the vivifying principle —truth; and the inevitable consequence was, the copied and the common-place. "Waverley" was the avater of a new era; and established, as it now is, among our English classics, justice cannot be done to its merits without reference to its contemporaries —"the dwindled race of little men"—the hewers of wood, and the drawers of water, where their great forefathers had planted the forest, and sank the "pure well of English undefiled."

"Waverley" was at once a novel of character, like those of Fielding and Richardson; and one of adventure, like those of Defoe; but it had that peculiar stamp of its own which genius alone can give. Founded, like the old ballads, on tradition, it entered the province of poetry, while the time in which it was written gave enlightenment, and the writer's mind its own shrewdness, sharpened by that dry humour which is essentially of Scottish growth. Scott is the founder of a new school—the picturesque, which now, more or less, influences all our writers. "Waverley" was a succession of pictures —both landscape and portrait—indeed all his characters give the idea of portraits rather than of inventions.

Flora Mac Ivor belongs to poetry—poetry which takes the highest order of qualities, to fashion into beauty, and quicken into life. It was the first attempt to give the ideal to female character in

prose, if we except the "Clementina" and "Clarissa" of Richardson. But, despite of his great merits, Richardson had one fault, fatal to the lasting popularity of an author—he was too conventional. The excellent and the beautiful had no wide grasp—to-day was too much with him; he dwelt on "nice observances," and made goodness so dependent on forms and ceremonies, that the spirit was lost while attending to the shape; yet some of his conceptions are singularly fine. I know nothing in all our old drama so fertile in striking situations, so utterly desolate, as Clarissa in her wretched lodging, seated calmly at work on her shroud. She is young, but the grave yawns at her feet; she is beautiful, but the pride of loveliness is gone by for ever: delicately nurtured, she lacks the common necessaries of life, and made to be cherished and beloved, she is deserted by relative and friend. It was a great moral truth that made Richardson feel that it was impossible for such a story to end happily—it would have been to make evil work out its own reward. Clarissa could not marry Lovelace: to marry him had been to swear love and respect; the pure and noble nature must have been perverted before she could have felt either: all Clarissa could do was to forgive, and that only on her death-bed, and in the presence of her God.

But Scott possessed what Richardson lacked,

the general, and the picturesque. "Flora Mac Ivor" has those qualities which we all like to believe belong to human nature; the ideal is but the realization, in a palpable form, of our noblest emotions, of our highest aspirations. Generous and high-spirited as she is, Flora never goes beyond what we wish, and what we feel, a woman might be. Generally speaking, the female character is developed through the medium of affection—till she loves, she has rarely felt, consequently rarely thought much—for thoughts are but the representatives of past feelings—it is the heart that awakens the mind in woman. But Flora Mac Ivor is among the exceptions to this rule. I believe that the imaginative, and the highly-gifted, are the least susceptible; when they do love, it is with the depth and the energy to which themselves give strength; but the imagination rarely at first seeks an object where it must depend; it likes to feel its freedom, and its earliest pursuit is usually unselfish and abstract.

Flora's imagination has an object in its loyalty—and her affection in her brother. If there be one tie on earth, dear even as love, it is that which unites an only brother and sister, left together orphans in their childhood. If "heaven lies around us in our infancy," there is something sacred in the love—an instinct with that earliest time. It grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength;

it has the confidence of marriage without its care; and, cemented by those mutual associations, whose want is so often and so severely felt in married life, it has the tenderness with none of the jealous anxiety of love. The very faults of Fergus, perhaps, did but draw the tie closer between himself and his sister. It is pleasant to excuse, when hope brings the promises of the future to palliate the errors of the past. We can imagine the youthful Highlanders returning to a country, dearer for absence; and under actual disappointment, looking forward as only youth can look. In after life the heart sinks back upon itself—we have not courage to hope.

Nothing, to use the word so peculiarly his own, can be more picturesque than the first introduction of Fergus and his sister; and while the chieftain's animation in his cause carries us along, we cannot but feel that it is Flora who infuses into their loyalty its nobler elements. It is to the credit of our nature that the generous impulse, the unselfish devotion, are never without their influence; but it is a fearful thing to influence others; every thought we have suggested, every action we have stimulated, rise, if their issue be unsuccessful, in terrible array against us. Our own fate we might have borne, but regret becomes remorse when we have urged on that of another. Clarissa might sew the garment of death calmly—it was for herself; but Flora

sits sewing the shroud of her brother—the young, the gifted, the high-spirited Fergus, the last of their ancient line—the prematurely doomed chief of Glennaquoich. I never could read without tears his sister's bitter self-reproaches, that she had been the one to urge him on, and—to the scaffold! It is the cry of the heart-broken, when she so passionately exclaims, "Oh! that I could but remember to have said to him, he that strikes by the sword, shall die by the sword." It is a relief to think of Flora in the silence and the solitude of the cloister. The gates of life are as much closed upon her as if she had passed through those of death. The cause lost on which she had perilled what was dearer than existence, and the house of Stuart again in hopeless exile; her beloved brother in his early and ignominious grave—what remained for Flora but to ask her own tomb from that Heaven, the only light through the black veil of the order of St. Dominick.

No. 2.—ROSE BRADWARDINE.

THERE is one felicity of style which is peculiarly Scott's own; the very happy names which he gives his *dramatis personæ*. Whether of grace or of humour, they are singularly characteristic. Literary godfathers and godmothers, like those in real

life, have much to answer for, on the score of the inappropriate. This complaint cannot be urged against the natural and charming heiress of Tully Vedarose, by name, and rose by nature; neither lover nor poet could have imagined a more fitting emblem for the lovely girl, whose youth and bloom are in exquisite contrast to the various venerable objects by which she is surrounded—from the ancient tower, where she "makes a sunshine in a shady place," to the ancient baillie Mac Wheeble, whose heart, crusted as it is with native and professional selfishness, has yet one warm and soft touch of affection for the child he has seen grow to all but womanhood beneath his eyes. Scott indicates, to use an expressive Irishism, "what a darling she is," by the attachment she inspires in all around. No one makes the heart of a little home circle entirely their own, without some very sweet gifts of nature—we must love to be beloved. That Waverley did not in the first instance yield his heart—"rescue or no rescue"—militates nothing against Rose's attraction. Lord Byron says, "In youth we like something older than ourselves, in age something younger." This is most especially true in a youth of imaginative temperament. He looks for a goddess, and it is rarely till more than one cloud has melted into bodiless air, that he begins to think that the claims of a young and pretty woman are at least equal to his own. What at first he asked from love, were excitement and romance;

as he goes on he discovers, that the real pearl of price is affection. Rose Bradwardine is a simple, unaccomplished, but not uneducated girl. The old baron, in spite of his oddities, is a thorough-bred gentleman. Gentle breeding is Rose's by heritage. Every thing about her indicates native refinement. All her tastes have a delicate touch of poetry—from her little chamber in the turret, overlooking the loveliest point of landscape, down to the flower-beds, which the old domestic forgets his dignity so far as to dig with his own hands for the sake of Miss Rose.

It is the most natural thing in the world that she should love Edward Waverley. He is the first young and accomplished cavalier that she has seen. He treats her with kindness, and immediately she is in a situation to render him service, the most attaching position possible to the generosity of a woman's nature; to succour is with her almost to love. Secluded and simple-minded, the young and warm-hearted Rose could not be without romance; romance born of the purest poetry, and the keenest sensibility. The unconscious awakening of love in such a heart, is one of the loveliest objects in nature. It is the first ruffling of the dove's plumage in the dewy light of morning, warm with the quick pulse that beats beneath the rainbow colours, varying the expanding yet timid wings. Flora Mac Ivor, with her affectionate care for one who is to her like a sweet younger sister, was right in deeming Rose

the fitting bride for the representative of the Waverleys. She would have found her mental superiority very much in the way of domestic felicity. To look up is the natural feminine position. While Rose would have been lost in delighted admiration when her husband showed her a design for a temple to end some newly-cut vista in the woods of Waverley Honour, or read to her his latest translation of a sonnet from "Petrarch," Flora would fain have urged to those more active, if more dangerous pursuits, which gain man place among his fellows. While the one would have exclaimed—

> "Shame to the coward thought that ere betray'd,
> The noon of manhood to a myrtle shade;"

the other would only have felt the happiness of being at his side. Flora was fit to be compeer and companion to one who allowed her superiority because he knew his own. She would have been "worthy to be the bride of Pericles;" while Rose was just suited to the quiet, unpretending gentleman, who looked to his landed property for his ambition, and to his hearth for his enjoyments. Rose was right in her answer, when Flora spoke of Edward Waverley wandering along his park by moonlight, with his beautiful wife hanging on his arm—"and she will be a very happy woman." The prophecy brought its own fulfilment.

GUY MANNERING.

No. 3.—JULIA MANNERING.

THERE is one point of view in which the Waverley novels may be considered peculiarly suited to our age, which piques itself on its utilitarism, viz. the capital which they have been the means of circulating; in paper, printing, bookbinding, and conveyance of the volumes, which amount to an immense sum; and there is no country civilized enough for literature where they are not to be found. But one benefit they have conferred has been expressly for Scotland, and the head of Walter Scott would be the fittest sign for every inn in the land of cakes. He originated the taste for travelling there, now so universal. Sixty years ago a tour through the Highlands was much about what a tour through Crim Tartary would be considered at present. Now, how few there are among those who travel at all, but have sailed on—

"Lovely Loch Achray.
Where shall they find in foreign land,
So lone a lake—so sweet a strand."

Few but have passed the Trossachs; and though I plead guilty to the weakness of feeling it a shock to hear of a steam-boat on Loch Katrine, yet, considering that a steam-boat makes that a pleasure for the many, which would otherwise be confined to the few, the dark chimney may smoke through

"Every vale,
Rent from the Saxon and the Gael."

In nothing more than in travelling are the picturesque and the useful blended together, and Scotland is now, thanks to the author of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," classic ground; it is filled with associations—it is peopled with the past.

It is no paradox to say, that the country is never so much enjoyed as by the dwellers in cities. How many are there who live eleven months on the hope of the twelfth given to some brief but delightful wandering. Even in the dull and mindless routine of a watering-place, where shrimps and rabbles are the Alpha and Omega of the day, there is refreshment and relief; and how much are these increased, when the perceptions, as well as the sensations, are called into play? How much poetical feeling, how much enthusiasm, has the perusal of some favourite work excited in the minds of those about to visit the scenes depicted. How much was the actual enjoyment heightened by the various remembrances called up; what a store of pleasant reminiscences must be carried home to the fire-side, and what

a new pleasure to open some page of glowing description, now familiar to the eye as well as to the fancy. It is impossible for even the most common-place mind not to gain something of the refined and the ideal in such a process; and in the mutual intercourse thus established between two countries, separated by old hostilities, numberless prejudices, and some unkindness must have been swept away in a manner unusually conciliating to both parties. "Waverley," and "Guy Mannering," are international links.

"Guy Mannering" is a novel of modern manners, or rather of modern date; for with one or two exceptions, the district is so remote, that the customs are of the olden time. In the admirably drawn character of Colonel Mannering, ample reason is found for its locale—he is the very man to whom the seclusion of a wild country would be its chief attraction. The habits of a man accustomed to command—especially on a foreign station, would necessarily be reserved and secluded. Not only accustomed to implicit obedience, but aware of its imperative necessity under the circumstances in which they have been placed, such are apt to expect it from all. Now, what is but the necessary authority in official life, and with man over man, seems harshness when extended to woman. How often, perhaps, must Colonel Mannering's decision have seemed sternness, his reserve coldness, his ab-

straction indifference, and his authority tyranny, to a young, spoilt, and pretty woman. Her attachment would not be diminished, for his high qualities ensured that respect needful for the duration of affection; but he had also those which keep the imagination alive, and of that, feminine love is "all compact." We can also believe that Colonel Mannering was very fond of his wife, though shy of showing it, even to herself; above all, his pride would revolt from any of that display before others in which she would take an excusable vanity. Pride on the one hand—petulance on the other, would soon lead to misunderstanding, the weaker party would soon be forced to yield, and the yielding would be less palatable from the consciousness of having been wrong. Colonel Mannering is a strictly just man, but not one to make allowances; a weakness would irritate him as much as a fault. Deceit is the offspring of fear, especially with woman; and the sophistry of—

"It is such a trifle it cannot matter," . .

is too easy not to be tempting in practice. We have dwelt on Colonel Mannering's character—for the whole story grows out of it; and, moreover, it formed both that of his wife and daughter. But while Julia's habits and opinions were from her mother, she inherited some of the qualities of her father—the high spirit, the quick feeling, and the

intelligence, are of paternal origin—she would understand and justify any confidence that might be placed in her. There is something singularly natural in her letters: gay, ignorant of reality, yet with a native quick perception, they are just what a clever, spoilt, self-witted girl, quite unacquainted with the world, would write. The inherent good feeling and sense of propriety soon show themselves, and it is a relief that the clandestine correspondence in which we find her engaged has so many extenuating circumstances; for in spite of moonlight, rope-ladders, and a chaise-and-four, the love affair, carried on in opposition and secrecy, will mostly end ill. Deception is always an evil, but in youth—youth, whose very faults should be open-hearted and impetuous, it lays the foundation of the worst possible faults of character. Moreover, unromantic as it may sound, the objections of the elder party are often more wisely founded than their juniors are tempted to admit, and life has no wretchedness equal to an ill-assorted marriage—it is the sepulchre of the heart, haunted by the ghosts of past affections, and hopes gone by for ever.

No. 4.—LUCY BERTRAM.

Lucy Bertram's story is that of many others where nature and fortune are at variance—the one

as slavish as the other is niggard. Nature gave Lucy Bertram the lovely face and the sweet disposition, but fortune surrounded her with difficulties and sorrows. From her cradle, whose companion was the coffin of her mother, her young life must have been one of anxiety and of struggle. Her natural good sense would soon show the embarrassments which were daily thickening around her ruined father, while she must see the fruitlessness of her own efforts to retrieve or assist. From the time that she could think at all her thoughts must have been sad and careful ones; and what strength, yet sweetness of character, they gradually developed! A quick perception of propriety is the chief characteristic of her mind, while warm, but timid affection, is that of her heart. I know no circumstances so melancholy as those of a decayed family: the very fact of having known better days only aggravates the privations of the present—and pride inflicts—

> "Tortures the poor alone can know,
> The proud alone can feel."

Scott has skilfully surrounded the falling house of Ellangowan with every possible circumstance that could excite interest in its fortunes. There is the long descent, coupled with stirring traditions of love and war; and call it prejudice or fantasy, the pride of birth has a hold on our respect, linked

half by habit, half by that subtle influence which the past has over the mind. Truly, as Schiller beautifully says—

"Time consecrates;
And what is grey with age, becomes religion."

Then there is the pity for the kind-hearted master turned from his homestead in his old age—a man, too, who has been "nobody's enemy but his own," though certainly he had better have been an enemy to some one else. Next our justice is enlisted on his behalf—his own imprudence is merged in generous indignation against the ungrateful dependant who has thus requited confidence. Last, is the interest felt for youth and loveliness left alone in this bleak and bitter world. "Guy Mannering" is, like its companions, filled with pictures. What a picture is that of the old man, seated for the last time in his arm-chair, removed from its accustomed place by the fireside, to the sunny bank, waiting to leave the home of his forefathers, though all see that "a darker departure is near," while his child, his patient, affectionate child, watches at his side. Almost every appearence, too, of Meg Merrilies is a stage effect, as dramatic in situation as it is in language. There are some exquisite touches of poetry. In her well-known denunciation, what can be finer than the—"This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths—see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the brighter for that:"—or, again,

what can be more pathetic than her lament over the Cairn of Dernclough.

"Do you see that blackit and broken end of a sheeling? there my kettle boiled for forty years—there I bore twelve buirdly sons and daughters—where are they now?—where are the leaves that were on that auld ash tree at Martinmas? the west wind has laid it bare, and I am stripped too. . . . It will ne'er be green again, and Meg Merrilies will never sing sangs mair, be they blithe or sad. But ye'll no forget her, and ye'll gar build up the old wa's for her sake! !" . . . Mixed with the romantic and the pathetic, how much too there is in "Guy Mannering" of the amusing and the humorous. Pleydell is a comedy in himself, and now a relic of the olden time. Strange how manners change, and how to-morrow alters all it can of yesterday; but an acute and kind-hearted lawyer with peculiarities which, like a touch of sharp sauce, give flavour to the viand, might and will be longer found than the sturdy and honest farmer of Charlie's Hope. When civilization comes to a certain point, the changes in the higher classes are little more than those of fancies and of fashions; but those operating on the classes below are changes of character.

Never did book end more satisfactorily than "Guy Mannering." We are glad of Julia's marriage, but we have even a kindlier interest in that

of the sweet and timid Lucy. The work has only one sin of omission. Mr. Pleydell declares that Mrs. Allan's sauce to the wild duck, of lemon, claret, and cayenne, was beyond all praise. Truly, for the benefit of future generations, Mrs. Allan's receipt ought to have been given.

THE ANTIQUARY.

No. 5.—MISS WARDOUR.

THE history of credulity would be the most singular page in the great history of mankind. From those vast beliefs which have founded religions and empires, down to the inventions that garnish the last new murder, there has always been a tendency in the human mind to believe with as little expense of the reasoning faculty as possible. A few useful doubters have certainly existed, and we cannot but agree with a late periodical writer, who says, "a doubt is a benefit to the truth;" generally speaking, however, doubt requires to be sharpened by vanity or by interest before it becomes an effective agent—the original leaning is the other way. When I left England the wondrous effects of animal magnetism usually came in to be discussed with the fish and soup; and if Sir Walter could have heard the miracles recorded, and the miracles credited and accredited by "the most respectable witnesses," he might not have thought it necessary to apologize for making his German charlatan an instrument in

his plot. It is a curious fact, that the true has always been more opposed at the outset than the false; the circulation of the blood and vaccination nearly lost their discoverers credit and practice, while some vender of quack medicines makes a rapid fortune. This may perhaps be accounted for, simply, that the impostor addresses the multitude, while the scientific discoverer appeals to his brethren in knowledge, all of whom are inclined to deny, what, if admitted, must show, that a great part of their own research and acquirement has been in vain; still he who trades on human credulity will have a good stock on hand, especially when the lure held forth is that of gain.

Sir Arthur Wardour, involved in embarrassments from which he lacked skill, resolution, and means to extricate himself, was the very man to hope improbabilities—and from the improbable to the impossible is but a step. It is very remarkable the skill with which Sir Walter works out his second-rate characters—we should ascribe this to their being taken from real life—his *dramatis personæ* are remembrances rather than inventions, he required straw for his bricks, and his imagination did not begin to work till his memory had garnered up material: hence his Scottish novels are unquestionably the best, for there his impressions are the most vivid. He needed a clue to the labyrinth of human nature—and that clue was observation. He

rarely creates a character; he is not given to subtle analysis, and we never come upon those remarks which seem like a window suddenly thrown open, that we had never seen unclosed before; but he is the great master of the outward and the actual. Every observation that he makes is rational and rightminded, but they never come like new discoveries; the reader applauds them as the echo of what he has already known to be right, but they never startle him into thinking. All Scott's qualities were opposed to the metaphysical; he and his cotemporary, Goëthe, were the antipodes of each other. The German looked within, the Scotchman looked without: to the one was assigned the province of thought—to the other that of action. The genius of the one stands as much alone as the genius of the other.

As a story teller, Scott is unrivalled; he would have made the fortune of a café at Damascus. The common conversation of every day may show how rare such a talent is; one person will give you a little narrative of some recent event, and politeness alone will compel attention; while, perhaps, one in a hundred will keep you amused while recounting a seemingly trivial accident. In the present novel there is a situation—a great favourite with our author, it is that of a father and daughter left dependant on each other's mutual affection. Rose Bradwardine, Julia Mannering, Lucy Ber-

tram, Isabel Wardour, and Diana Vernon, are all the only daughters of a widowed father. It would be difficult, though interesting, to trace in what this predilection of Scott's originated. Such a tie is one of nature's most sacred and most touching. How deep must be the feeling of the bereaved parent who cannot look on the fair face of his child without recalling a face, once the fairest and the dearest in the world: the shadow of the grave hangs around the infant playfulness of the orphan, and even the hopes of the present must come tinged with something of sadness from the past. How soon too, with the quick feelings of her sex, would the orphan-girl learn that consolation needed to be mixed with her affection; a vague pity would mingle with her caresses, and each party would think there required so much allowance to be made for the other —and allowances are the golden links of domestic happiness. The memory of the departed would be a perpetual bond of union—the father would think how sad for his child was the loss of a mother's care; while the daughter would feel a more anxious tenderness from knowing that it was hers to supply a tenderness even more anxious than her own. The affection of his daughter throws a respectability around Sir Arthur; she loves him, she humours his little foibles, and, for her sake, others also bear with him.

Isabella Wardour's kindness of heart is indicated

in all those slight things which throw such sweetness on the common air of life. The old beggar, the inimitable Edie Ochiltre, at the risk of his life, meets them on the beach, because "he could na bide to think o' the dainty young lady's peril, that has aye been kind to ilka forlorn heart that cam' near her." Even the Antiquary, with all his contempt for his "womankind," has an involuntary respect for her. If any further proof of her attraction be needed, she is the object of a romantic and devoted attachment, which if eye and manner requite less kindly than the conscious heart—it is for her father's sake. However, neither she nor Lovel need regret her earlier discouragement; for what man ever valued an object whose pursuit was unattended by trouble? Difficulty is as needful to appreciation as labour is to existence.

No. 6.—MARY MAC INTYRE.

THE preface of this work mentions, that it was less favourably received on its first appearance than its predecessors, though in the long run it has quite equalled their success. This may be reckoned among Scott's triumphs. The character of the Antiquary was less familiar to the generality of readers than it is now, when his own writings have originated a taste for the study of antiquities among

the many; he has himself shown to what such a study might lead, when it has not been made a mania for collecting "toys and trifles," whose chief value was their age. He set no undue value on relics, perhaps as valid as "the two tears of Queen Niobe kept in a glass bottle" of the Xavre. But the spirit in which Scott collected was that of the historian, and of the poet. The spur, the drinking-cup, the inscription on the mouldering stone, and the black-lettered manuscript, served to illustrate those daily manners, without whose knowledge any attempt to depict national character must be incomplete. The information thus gathered was the material of the historian, and the inspiration of the poet. The sword might be broken, the spur rusted, and the marble grey and defaced, yet not the less would the days hover round them, when the sword was that of some noble baron, and the graven letters told of honour cut short in some brief and bright career, or of loveliness laid low, even in the hour of summer.

Monkbarns is an antiquarian of another kind; he dreams no dreams, he sees no visions; his pursuits are those of an active mind, which from some chance circumstance has received its bent—a mind active yet narrow, and circumscribed by bodily indolence, while the possession of knowledge, though of a kind generally denominated "learned lumber," is sufficient to keep alive a sufficient stock of

self-love. Secluded, pursuing studies of a dry and abstract sort; kind-hearted, yet needing some strong impulse to draw such kindness forth; and, excepting in the cases of Roman pavements, plain, shrewd and practical; yet he is the rallying point for the romance of the story. Scott well understood the force of contrast. Attached, as the shy and silent are apt to be, to one whose frank gaiety is perhaps a relief to their sombre temperament, the Antiquary has undergone the common fate of seeing a more gifted rival win the young beauty, who thought little of the awkward student. Her fate is a melancholy one—suicide, or a dark suspicion of violence, and a dishonoured name; these are the remains of the lovely Eveline Neville. Every bitterness that could aggravate the misery of an unhappy attachment is here. The thought must have been for ever recurring that the heart was broken which would have reposed in safety beside his own—broken for another who proved less worthy of such trust than himself. Disappointment and regret close all the avenues of warmer affections: he has suffered too much to risk such suffering again; still the kindness peeps out in spite of indulged humours, oddities, and a system of callousness—and this is a true picture. How often, among our acquaintance, have we met some individual whose crabbed temper has provoked our irritability, or whose

peculiarities have awakened our mirth; could we look into the early history of that individual, and trace the causes that have led sorrow to mask itself with eccentricity, we should feel only wonder and pity; but the waters of life are for ever flowing onwards, and little trace do they bear of what clouds have darkened or reddened the waves below as they floated by. In despite of his affected contempt of the fairer half of the creation, his niece, Mary Mac Intyre, has a hold upon his heart; witness his instant anxiety when he fancies that she is exposed to the storm—though he avenges its betrayal by the contempt he at once throws on the truly feminine remedy of a basin of gruel, with a glass of white wine in it. We see, however, but very little of her, she only speaks in a few affectionate sentences of remonstrance to her hot-headed brother; still we wish to see more of her—a true novel reader will feel defrauded of his just rights, when at the close there is only a rumour of her marriage with Captain Wardour, which rumour wants confirmation. We will, however, hope for the best—and that best is to suppose her married in her uncle's neighbourhood. We like to imagine the old man, with age gradually smoothing down all asperities, as the shadows of twilight soften the landscape while the night approaches, and surrounded by those whose affection grows nearer and

dearer every hour. We are fain to believe the later years of his life the happiest; but, and this is the great charm of all Scott's works, we feel as if we had known the various actors in his varied scenes—and we bid the Antiquary farewell with the same good wishes that we should bestow on an old and favourite friend.

ROB ROY.

No. 7.—DIANA VERNON.

MANY and opposite are the lots in life, and unequal are the portions which they measure out to the children of earth. We cannot agree with those who contend that the difference after all is but in outward seeming. Such an assertion is often the result of thoughtlessness—sometimes the result of selfishness. It is one of the good points of human nature, that it revolts against human suffering. Few there are who can witness pain, whether of mind or of body, without pity, and the desire to alleviate; but such is our infirmity of purpose, that a little suffices to turn us aside from assistance. Indolence, difficulties, and contrary interests come in the way of sympathy, and then we desire to excuse our apathy to ourselves. It is a comfortable doctrine to suppose that the evil is made up by some mysterious allotment of good; it is an excuse for non-interference, and we let conscience sleep over our own enjoyments, taking it for granted others have them also—though how we know not. It was much this

spirit that made the young French queen exclaim, when she heard that the people were perishing for want of bread, "why do they not eat buns!"

But there is a vast difference in the paths of humanity; some have their lines cast in pleasant places, while others are doomed to troubled waters. Of one person, that question might well be asked, which Johnstone, the old Scotch secretary, put to Sir Robert Walpole, "What have you done, sir, to make God Almighty so much your friend?" while another would seem "the very scoff and mockery of fortune." It must, however, be admitted, that the hard circumstances form the strong character, as the cold climes of the north nurture a race of men, whose activity and energies leave those of the south far behind. Hence it is that the characters of women are more uniform than men; they are rarely placed in circumstances to call forth the latent powers of the mind. Diana Vernon's character would never have grown out of a regular education of geography, history, and the use of the globes, to say nothing of extras, such as Poonah work, or oriental tinting. Miss Vernon is the most original of Scott's heroines, especially so, when we consider the period to which she herself belongs, or that at which such a spirited sketch was drawn. The manners of Scott's own earlier days were formal and restrained. An amusing story is told in his life of Lord Napier, which will admirably illus-

trate the importance attached to minutiæ. His lordship suddenly quitted a friend's house, where he was to have paid a visit, without any cause satisfactory to a host being assigned. But much ingenuity might have been exerted without the right cause being discovered; it was, that his valet had not packed up the set of neckcloths marked the same as the shirts.

Within the last few years what alterations have taken place in "the glass of fashion, and the mould of forms." The Duchess of Gordon brought in a style—bold, dashing, and reckless, like herself. The Duchess of Devonshire took the opposite—soft, languid, and flattering: the exclusives established a stoical school—cold, haughty, and *impayable*. The reform era has brought a more popular manner. There has been so much canvassing going on, that conciliation has become a habit, and the hustings has remodelled the drawing-room.

But Diana Vernon is a creature formed by no conventional rules; she has been educated by her own heart amid hardships and difficulties; and if nature has but given the original good impulse, and the strength of mind to work it out, hardships and difficulties will only serve to form a character of the loftiest order. Again, there is that tender relationship between the widowed father and the only girl, in which Scott so much delights. But, if the cradle be lonely which lacks a mother at its

side, still more lonely is the hour when girlhood is on the eve of womanhood.

> " On the horizon like a dewy star,
> That trembles into lustre."

No man ever enters into the feelings of a woman, let his kindness be what it may; they are too subtle and too delicate for a hand whose grasp is on " life's rougher things." They require that sorrow should find a voice; now the most soothing sympathy is that which guesses the suffering without a question. But Diana Vernon has been brought up by a father, who, whatever might be his affection, has had no time for minute and tender cares. Engaged in dark intrigues, surrounded by dangers, he has been forced to leave his child in situations as dangerous as his own, nay, a thousand times worse—what is an outward to an inward danger? The young and beautiful girl is left to herself—in a wild solitude, like Osbaldistone-hall—with a tutor like Rashleigh.

Take the life of girls in general; how are they cared for from their youth upwards. The nurse, the school, the home circle, environ their early years; they know nothing of real difficulties, or of real cares; and there is an old saying, that a woman's education begins after she is married. Truly, it does, if education be meant to apply to the actual

purposes of life. How different is the lot of a girl condemned from childhood upwards to struggle in this wide and weary world! Bitter, indeed, is the fruit of the tree of knowledge to her; at the expense of how many kind and beautiful feelings must that knowledge be obtained; how often will the confidence be betrayed, and the affection misplaced; how often will the aching heart turn on itself for comfort, and in vain; for, under its first eager disappointment, youth wonders why its kindliness and its generous emotions have been given, if falsehood and ingratitude be their requital. How often will the right and the expedient contend together, while the faults of others seem to justify our own, and the low, but distinct voice within us, be half lost, while listening to the sophistry of temptation justifying itself by example; yet how many nobly support the trial, while they have learned of difficulties to use the mental strength which overcomes them, and have been taught by errors to rely more decidedly on the instinctive sense of right which at once shrinks from their admission.

What to Diana Vernon was the craft and crime of one like Rashleigh, which her own native purity would at once detect and shun—as the dove feels and flies from the hawk before the shadow of his dark wings be seen on the air? What the desolate loneliness of the old hall, and the doubts and fears

around her difficult path—what but so many steps towards forming a character high-minded, steadfast, generous and true; a lovely and lonely flower over which the rough winds have past, leaving behind only the strength taught by resistance, and keeping fresh the fairness—blessing even the rock with its sweet and healthy presence.

THE BLACK DWARF.

No. 8.—ISABEL VERE.

After all, though beauty be deceitful, and favour be vain, yet beauty is the most exquisite gift ever lavished by fairies around an infant cradle. Its charm is nameless; it wins us, we know not why—and lingers on our memory, we know not wherefore. Whether in the animate or the inanimate world, it is the cause of our most delicious sensations; it belongs to the imagination, for it calls up within us whatever of poetry may be lurking in the "hidden mines of thought." It is the attribute of all that is most glorious in existence—it is on the azure sky—it clothes the earth as with a garment—it rides triumphant over the purple bosom of the sea. Look within our hearts, it has originated all that is ideal in our nature. Beauty is the shadow flung from heaven on earth—it is the type of a lovelier and more spiritual existence, and the broken and transitory lights that it flings on this our sad and heavy pilgrimage, do but indicate another

and a better sphere, where the beautiful will also be the everlasting. The homage involuntarily paid to its mysterious influence is but an unconscious acknowledgment of its divine origin, and its eternal future. Here we see it, but through a glass darkly.

The presence of beauty has been perpetual in our fictions, but Scott was the first novelist who made its absence the ground-work for the character of a hero. His example has been followed in more than one illustrious instance, though whether it gave the hint for Byron's "Deformed Transformed," admits of a question. Full of animation, breaking new ground, and dramatic in action, if not in construction, it is to be regretted that it should only be a fragment: I doubt whether it could ever have been finished, it came too home. A sensitive person feels, and an imaginative one exaggerates any defect—and Lord Byron was both. His lameness originating, as it did, in an unsightly malconformation, was a perpetual source of bitterness to him. What was its effect on Scott it would be more difficult to discover; naturally reserved and cautious, his own feelings are rarely allowed to peep out in the course of his narratives; but it is remarkable that in two instances he has made the personal deficiences of his heroes lead to the formation of their characters, each character exercising a paramount influence on the conduct of the story.

In Rashleigh Osbaldistone the effect has been

evil; in the ill-fated Black Dwarf, the kind warm heart remains the same—under the pang of disappointment, and the disguise of misanthropy. The woman that he loved is gone down to her early grave, and her death breaks the only tie that binds him to his kind; but "we have all of us one human heart," and the lonely and forgotten misanthrope still feels that he is accessible to emotion. Isabel Vere is the daughter of the beloved one—her whose happiness he bought at the price of his own; her sorrow has yet power on a heart that strives to harden itself in vain. The Black Dwarf is not among my favourites; the pity felt for the poor recluse is too painful—too painful, because hopeless. There is a mark upon him which parts him from his kind; and we never feel that more than when he is in the very act of serving them. Take the interview between him and Isabel Vere, which is among Scott's most dramatic situations. In spite of his assumed harshness, his heart is beating with warm and human emotions; the remembrance of his ill-fated, but long-enduring attachment, pity, and the resolve to assist, are all struggling together; yet what is the involuntary effect on his visitor? fear, distrust, and aversion. Every kindness conferred by the Dwarf must have brought with it the "late remorse of love."

Owing independence, security, and domestic happiness to her strange protector, it must have been

a perpetual regret to Isabel Vere that her gratitude could not cheer his gloom, nor her care soothe his declining years. Sheridan Knowles has here the truer and nobler insight into human nature. It makes his "Hunchback" sensitive and suspicious; but even in his case the mental predominates over the physical; the generous loving heart, the high acquirement, the kind and gentle manner, have their rightful ascendancy; he has been happy in the love of his wife, and he is happy in the love of his child, won for him by years of care and affection, ere she knew aught of his parental claim. We follow the recluse to the gloomy cell of La Trappe with not only pity, but resentment against a fate so unjust; but it is a satisfaction to bring before the mind's eye the happy and honoured old age of Master Walter.

OLD MORTALITY.

No. 9.—EDITH BELLENDEN.

DESPITE of the loyalist aunt, and the Presbyterian uncle,

"How happily the days of Thalaba went by,"

when Henry Morton met Edith Bellenden in the green woods, nigh to the ancient and honoured tower, where his Majesty breakfasted. Marmontel says, somewhat irreverently, while speaking of love-making, "*le bonheur lui même n'est pas grande chose, mais les avenues sont delicieuses*," and he is so far right, that the earliest is the happiest time of that love, which is everywhere but on the lip. The cheek burns, the eye kindles, the step is lighter, and the voice softer, in that sweet time, when the conscious feelings have never ventured into words; it is like the feeling with which we listen to distant, yet exquisite, music; to speak were to break the lovely enchantment. Scott for once writes, not as if he had keenly observed, but

as if he had deeply felt the charm to which he lends language. He had himself wandered beneath the shade of—

" The weeping birch, the lady of the woods,"

with some fair companion, on whose face he only gazed by stealth—whole mornings had past by the side of some early idol,

" The only place he coveted,
In all a world so wide."

They too, perhaps, had interchanged volumes; and here we cannot but say a word in favour of books as the best pioneers in these kind of campaigns. The favourite volume whose reading we commend, is inevitably connected with ourselves—it must bring to our image those lonely hours when the recurrence of an image has such influence—it invests that image with the associations of poetry and fiction, and thus redeems it from the common-place of ordinary life. There is also the sympathy of taste—and how much may be inferred from a passage pencilled originally for no other eyes but our own. Then, too, a book is the prettiest stepping stone to a correspondence; it seems such a simple thing to write a note of thanks, and so natural to add some slight remark on the author; and how often is the criticism of an author's sentiments but the expression of our own! Were we to choose the

scene for love, it should certainly be in the country —a city casts its own care and anxieties on all who tread its busy streets. I have all my life been an indweller of the town, and I frankly confess, for a constant residence, I like it better than all the pastoral charms that ever made the morality of an essay, or gave grace to poetry; still there is that about the country to which the heart always turns with a feeling of freshness and renovation. The moonlight walk through the green wood, would come back upon the memory with a spell which would not belong to a lamp-lighted ramble. The green-leaf would give its freshness, the wild-flower its sweetness; on the ear would arise the murmur of the wind in the boughs—or the song of the brook singing like a child for very gladness. No wonder that Henry Morton was constant to Edith Bellenden. It may be doubted whether absence and distance be half such trials to love, as presence and possession. The remembrance of Edith Bellenden brought to the Scottish exile the scenes of his youth. Hopes long since departed, and some cherished to the last, were linked with her: she was the sweet tie that held him to his country—and his country is all-in-all to a Scotchman. It is a fact, that though a Scotchman be the most locomotive of individuals—there is scarcely a habitable part of the globe where he is not to be found—yet nothing ever weakens his attachment to his country. It is not the pride

of the English, which mostly takes a "comfortable form," a grow-your-own mutton sort of complacency, silent, and reserved, as if there were a domestic decorum in it—warm and quiet as his own fireside; still less is it the vanity of the Frenchman, who looks upon the victories of the nation as matters of personal triumph, the grandeur of the Tuilleries as his own, and the great qualities of all the great men of France as reflected upon himself The Scotchman's is a feeling altogether different; it is at once a deep steady friendship, and a blind enthusiastic love. He is little ready to admit those merits in another land, in which his own is deficient; he undervalues them, if he cannot altogether deny their existence; he holds them as superfluities. Something of the harsh, yet fine, outline of his native mountains, belongs to his moral structure; he makes few allowances, and though cautious of expressing his opinion, he has a calm rooted disdain for all customs and ideas which have not upon them the broad arrow of Scottish origin. His sense of right is strong within him; more based upon principle than impulse, it is usually an adhering guide through life. His religion is a stern reckoning with the frailties of mortality, and what he has of excitement belongs to his national poetry and music; it has but one *fête* in the year, and that is St. Andrew's Day. In no one narrative has Scott more forcibly embodied the peculiarities of his

countrymen than in Old Mortality. The Covenanters could only have existed in Scotland, where enthusiasm takes the shape of obstinacy, not of excitement. We read with wonder what men in those days endured for conscience sake—hardships, suffering, loss of worldly goods, and even death, yet we wonder more when we find on what small things this rigid conscience turned—some worthless ceremony, some question of surplice and cassock, and men have given up life and living, rather than allow the hundredth psalm to peal from an organ within the walls of their church; still this severe discipline may have led to good, for we believe that in no religious establishment are the pure doctrines of our faith more visible than in the church of Scotland.

No. 10.—JENNY DENNISON.

In nothing does Sir Walter Scott show his great skill in the delineation of human nature more than in the characters taken from low life. These had been generally confined to a valet, half knave, half fool; a lady's maid, who took her mistress's airs like cast-off dresses, a little the worse for the wear; and now and then a virtuous peasant. But his lower range of *dramatis personæ* are as varied and as striking as the most important performers—they are at once

individuals and national specimens. Day by day the strong ties of feudal bondage are loosening before the high-pressure of steam-engines, the progress of wealth, and the scattering of power; soon there will be little remaining but what is preserved in these graphic pages. The advantages of general independence are too obvious for dispute; but it may be regretted that the rich and poor now-a-days live so far apart: they have no amusements in common, and it is the cheerful hours of life past together that most knit the social ties. The hunt in his forest, and the Christmas by his hearth, drew the baron and his people together, each in their most lightsome mood—the gain was mutual. There is a beautiful, though more modern touch of this in the "Antiquary," when Monkbarns carries the head of the young fisherman to the grave; it was the acknowledgment of human nature's equality in the hour of suffering—it was the practical admission that

"We have all of us one human heart."

Partly from being a more scattered population, which leads to self-dependence—partly to their religious struggles having given an historical character to their ordinary remembrances, nourished by that family pride which loves to look back—there is more individuality among the Scotch than

among any other peasantry. It loses none of its raciness in the hands of their great painter.

The female character is always a softened reflection of the male; whatever are the peculiarities of the one, are, as Moore says of his lover and mistress—

> "The changes of his face
> In her's reflected with still lovelier grace,
> Like echo sending back sweet music, fraught
> With twice the aerial sweetness it had wrought."

Scott's female portraits are as life-like as those of his men. Take the fisherman's wife—why you can in fancy hear the "flyting" between her and Miss Grizzy, the maiden lady—starch, grave, but "weel respeckit;" or, again, Alison Wilson, the housekeeper in this very tale: there is the lofty generosity! It does not even appear to cross her imagination that she may retain house and lands when the rightful heir appears; she at once talks of them as his own; and in her anxiety to conform even to the prodigal habits which he may have acquired in foreign parts, she allows that he may "eat meat three times a week." I know few passages that affect me so much as the meeting between the faithful creature and her youthful, nay, no longer youthful, master—

> "But when return'd the boy, the boy no more
> Return'd exulting to his native shore,"

he returned as many return, who left their country with far higher hopes than Henry Morton—changed, subdued, and grey at heart before their time.

But we are keeping Jenny Dennison waiting—a fault she would not have pardoned in any one of her followers at trysting time. In this pearl of *soubrettes* Scott has most ingeniously blended the general cast of her kind, and the peculiar cast of her country. She has a natural gift of coquetry, which is as much a talent as a taste for music, drawing, or any other female accomplishment; she not only, like Will Honeycombe, "laughs easily," (a most popular facility), but what is of infinitely more consequence to a woman, cries easily too. Her coquetry is also combined with calculation—she never forgets that though there is certainly no hurry in the matter, one or other of these lovers is some day to be her husband; and to do Jenny Dennison justice, she does not seem very particular which, though there is a sort of a preference for Cuddie. But the lovers of her mistress are of more importance to her than her own, and not so easily managed. She pities Morton, but her preference is for Lord Evandale. The dialogue between her and Cuddie, when she protests against any recognition of the former, as likely to militate against the interests of the latter with Edith, is a most exquisite piece of conjugal diplomacy. I remember pay-

ing a visit of condolence to a poor woman who had just lost her child; I could not help thinking while gazing on the abject poverty around, that the poor infant might have been congratulated on the early escape from the hardships which appeared its daily portion. My companion tenderly soothed the mother, and told of that other and better world, to which the grave is but the portal; but it was too soon—the truth was admitted, but the consolation was unfelt. An old woman who came in, understood the matter better. "True," said she, "you have lost your child, but you have still got a good and obedient husband." A good, that is, an obedient husband, was also Jenny Dennison's idea of a helpmate; and, allowing for a little obstinacy, there appears no doubt but that Mrs. Hedrigg was perfectly satisfied with her bargain.

THE HEART OF MID LOTHIAN.

No. 11.—JEANNIE DEANS.

Sir Walter, in his happiest moment, when memory furnished materials that genius worked out in invention, was never more fortunate than in the character of "Jeannie Deans." She is a heroine, in the highest and best sense of the word, though without one of the ordinary characteristics—she is neither romantic, picturesque, nor beautiful. Scott seems to have delighted in scorning the usual accessories of interest—and yet how strong is the interest excited!—it is the very triumph of common sense and of rigid principle.

> "We recognise
> A grandeur in the beatings of the heart,"

though that hearts beat neither for love, fame, nor ambition; whose echo is like the sound of a trumpet, startling men into pleased sympathy with the triumph its stately music proclaims. Nothing can be more quiet than what seems likely to be the

tenor of the Scottish maiden's path; she belongs to that humble class, which, if it has neither the quick sensibilities, nor the graceful pleasures of a higher lot, is usually freed from its fever, its sorrows, and its great reverses; her very lover seems to ensure her against the troubles of that troubled time,

> "——— whose spring resembles
> The uncertain glory of an April day."

For

> "Somewhat pensively he wooed,
> And spake of love with quiet blending,
> Slow to begin, and never ending,
> Of serious faith, and gentle glee."

She dwells among her own people, with the prospect of no greater grief than to see, in the fullness of years, her father's grey head go down in honour to the grave. Patience and saving will, sooner or later, enable Reuben or herself to marry, when

> "Contented wi' little,
> But canty wi' mair,"

they would be heads of a house as grave, calm, and well-ordered as those wherein their own childhood learnt its sedate and serious lessons. Yet this girl becomes the centre of one of those domestic tragedies which are the more terrible from their rare occurrence, and from the regular and pious habits which would seem to preclude their possibility. Disgrace darkens upon the humble roof tree, over-

coming it with "special wonder," and those to whom sin was a horrible thing afar, have it in their constant thoughts; it has been committed by one among themselves. We all know that there is evil in the world—we read of it—we hear of it—but we never think of its entering our own charmed circle. Look round our circle of acquaintance; how it would startle us to be asked to name one whom we thought capable of crime; how much more so to find that crime had been committed by one near and dear to our inmost heart. What a moral revulsion would such a discovery produce—how weak we should find ourselves under such a trial—how soon we should begin to disconnect the offender and the offence; then, for the first time, we should begin to understand the full force of temptation, and to allow for its fearful strength; and should we not begin to excuse what had never before seemed capable of palliation? Jeannie Deans' refusal to save her sister—so young, so beloved, so helpless—at the expense of perjury, has always seemed to me the noblest effort in which principle was ever sustained by religion. How well I remember (at such a distance from England, I may perhaps be pardoned for clinging to every recollection of the past) a discussion between some friends and myself, as to whether Jeannie Deans should have saved her sister's life—even with a lie I am afraid I rather argued—"and for a great

right, do a little wrong"—that to save one whom I loved, I must have committed the sin of perjury, and said on my soul be the guilt; that if even to refuse a slight favour was painful, who could bear to say no! when on that no! hung a fellow-creature's life—that fellow-creature most tenderly beloved. But I was in error—that worst error which cloaks itself in a good intention, and would fain appear only an amiable weakness. Jeannie Deans could not have laid the sin of perjury upon her soul: she had been brought up with the fear of the Lord before her eyes—she could not—dared not—take his name in vain. Many a still and solemn Sabbath, by the lingering light of the sunset sky, or with the shadow of the lamp falling around his gray hairs, must she have heard her father read the tale of how Annanias, and Sapphira his wife, were struck dead with a lie upon their lips;—dared she go, and do likewise? To her the court of justice, with its solemnities, and the awful appeal of its oath, must have seemed like a mighty temple. It was impossible that she could call upon that Book, which from the earliest infancy had been the object of her deepest reverence, to witness to the untruth. Yet with what more than Roman fortitude she prepares herself for suffering, toil, danger—anything so that she may but save her young sister. With what perfect simplicity she perseveres even unto the end; the kindness

she meets with takes her by surprise, and worldly fortune leaves her the same kind, affectionate, and right-minded creature. Her marriage—the quiet manse, and years of happiness, unnoted save by the daily thanksgiving—come upon the reader with the same sense of enjoyment and relief, that a shady and fragrant nook does the traveller, overwearied with the heat and tumult of the highway. We have no fear that the fanaticism of her father, or the earnest warning of her husband, will ever come into over rough collision, with such a tie between them—with such a sweet and womanly peace-maker.

No. 12.—EFFIE DEANS.

It is singular what an impression of perfect loveliness Scott gives us of the "Lily of St. Leonards;" he never describes her, and yet we never doubt that

> "A lovelier flower
> On earth was never seen."

We can fancy, to continue the application of Wordsworth's exquisite lines, that nature in her case said—

> "This child I to myself will take;
> She shall be mine, and I will make
> A lady of my own;
> . . . . . .

> She shall be sportive as the fawn,
> That wild with glee across the lawn,
> Or up the mountain springs."

The changes and contrasts in Effie's character, too, are given with more of metaphysical working than Scott often interfuses into his creations; "like, yet unlike, is each." We differ widely from each other; do we not, as circumstances change around us, moulding us like slaves to their will—do we not differ yet more from ourselves? We see Effie first of all, the lively and lovely girl—her step is as light as her heart

> "E'en the blue harebell raised its head,
> Elastic from her airy tread."

Her songs lead the way rejoicing before her; it is as if

> "The beauty born of murmuring sound,
> Had passed into her face."

No marvel that she is beloved—and no marvel that she loves. Those gay spirits need the softening of tender affection; that warm heart is full of passionate emotions—of quick yet deep sensations—of generous impulse, and ready confidence—all that so soon kindles into love. To such a temperament love rarely brings happiness: it is too eager—too trusting and too sensitive—its end is too often in tears. But for poor Effie's one hour of Eden, "a darker departure is near;" she is now shame-struck

and broken-hearted; the cheek is pale—the heart once gave it colour; but it is now as monumental marble; the desperation of the wretched is with her; she replies to the proposal of escape by a refusal, "Better tint life, since tint is guid fame;" yet she trembled before the death which she has staid to meet—she is too young to die. Nothing can be more pathetic than the meeting of the sisters. Can we not fancy how the poor prisoner's heart sank within her, when she heard her sister's step recede, slowly and sadly, day after day, from the pitiless door! What a change from the "Lily of St. Leonard's," shaking down the golden blossoms of the broom as some chance branch caught her more golden hair. But the change is, when the "Lily of St. Leonard's," and the pale prisoner of the Tolbooth has become Lady Staunton—the received wit—the admitted beauty—the courted and the flattered. I have heard this transition called unnatural; it is not so. How many are the mysteries of society! I do not agree with Goethe, who says that every man has that hidden in the secret recesses of his bosom, which, if known, would cause his fellow men to turn from him with hatred; on the contrary, I firmly believe that were the workings of the heart known, they would rather win for us favour and affection. It is not so much that our natural impulses are not good, as that we allow temptation to turn them aside; or,

"Custom to lie upon them with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life."

Still, how many go through life with the arrow in their side of which no one dreams—with some secret it were worse than death to divulge. Lady Staunton lives in that most wretched of restraints—perpetual reserve. I can conceive no punishment so dreadful as keeping perpetual watch on our words, lest they betray what they mean to conceal; to know no unguarded moment—no careless gaiety—to pine for the confidence which yet we dare not bestow—to tremble, lest that some hidden meaning lurk in a phrase which only our own sickly fancy could torture into bearing such—to have suspicion become a second nature—and to shrink every morning from the glad sunshine, for we know not what a day may bring forth: the wheel of Ixion were a tender mercy compared to such a state. Lady Staunton, too, fears her husband; and that says everything of misery that can fall to a woman's lot. It is dreadful to tremble at the step which was once earth's sweetest music—to start at a voice once so sweet in our ear, and watch if its tone be that of anger, even before we gather the import, and to hesitate before we meet eyes, now only too apt to look reproach and resentment. There is one touch of character full of knowledge in the human heart. Lady Staunton is glad to leave her sister's quiet parlour and garden, for the

wild heath spreading its purple harvest for the bees; and the rock side, where the step can scarce find uneasy footing amid the lichen and groundsel. How often is bodily weariness resorted to, to subdue the weariness within; and fortunate, indeed, are those who have never known that feverish unrest, which change of place mocks with the hope of change of suffering. Moreover, for few are the sorrows which know no respite, an imaginative taste must have seen enjoyment in

> "The grace of forest woods decayed,
> And pastoral melancholy;"

while the wilder scenes elevate us into forgetfulness of those human troubles which sink into nothingness before their mighty and eternal presence. Equally natural, too, is Lady Staunton's retirement to a convent; penance and seclusion were framed for such minds whose very penitence would be excitement. It was an extreme; and the "Lily of St. Leonard's" had led a life of extremes.

THE LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

No. 13.—ANNOT LYLE.

WHAT is the world that lies around our own? Shadowy, unsubstantial, and wonderful are the viewless elements, peopled with spirits powerful and viewless as the air which is their home. From the earth's earliest hour, the belief in the supernatural has been universal. At first the faith was full of poetry; for, in those days, the imagination walked the earth even as did the angels, shedding their glory around the children of men. The Chaldeans watched from their lofty towers the silent beauty of night—they saw the stars go forth on their appointed way, and deemed that they bore with them the mighty records of eternity. Each separate planet shone on some mortal birth, and as its aspect was for good or for evil, such was the aspect of the fortunes that began beneath its light. Those giant watch-towers, with their grey sages, asked of the midnight its mystery, and held its starry roll to be the chronicle of this breathing world. Time past on, angels visited the earth no more,

and the divine beliefs of young imagination grew earthlier. Yet poetry lingered in the mournful murmur of the oaks of Dodona, and in the fierce war song of the flying vultures, of whom the Romans demanded tidings of conquest. But prophecy gradually sank into divination, and it is a singular proof of the extent both of human credulity and of curiosity, to note the various methods that have had the credit of forestalling the future. From the stars to a tea-cup is a fall indeed—

> "Ah, who would soar the starry height,
> To settle in the tea at night."

To this day many a pretty face in a housemaid's cap grows serious, while some ancient crone reverses the cup, and from the grounds anticipates the course of events; there is, however, much similarity in their course, for the prediction always announces a present, a journey, and a ring. Telling fortunes by cards is a more scientific process. The sybil avers that Friday is the more propitious day—one or two lucky guesses rivet the attention—and though afterwards it is to be hoped that the listener will have the grace to blush, yet the attention often bestowed says much for the love of the unknown, inherent both in men and women. I believe that the grand secret of attraction is, that the details always turn on what is present to our fears, or gratifying to our vanity. The fair man,

as fair as hearts, who is with us in daylight and in dreams, usually takes a "local habitation and a name" from some secret hope;—it is pleasant to think that another as dark as spades is exceedingly "vexed in his mind" on our account; while self-love confirms the warning, to be on our guard against some envious woman as fair as diamonds.

But the most dignified shape that prophecy has taken in modern times is, unquestionably, the second sight. It takes its seeming from the wild country which gave it birth, where the grey mists clothing forest and mountain, so often delude the eye with unreal shapes. Without positive insanity, we know how the imagination may be worked upon to hold each strange tale devoutly true; and could a person once be sufficiently excited to believe that he possessed such a power, it would not long want confirmation strong as holy writ. Could such a gift be given, what a dreadful one to the possessor. To look on the face of youth, and see in it the writing of death, the shroud up to the throat; to stand beside your chosen friend, and watch the grave yawning at his feet!—better, a thousand times better, our brief span of knowledge, which knoweth little even of the present, than thus to look on a future whose sorrows are more than we can bear. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. The Legend of Montrose is not one of Scott's best narratives. Anderson, as the gallant and accom-

plished Montrose, fails to embody him whom Cardinal de Retz allows, realised his *beau ideal* of the heroes of chivalry. Dugald Dalgetty has, however, the stamp of the master; and Annot Lyle glides through the whole like a sunbeam. Her fair face, and sweet voice, are the light of the picture; the one dream of the poet amid the tumult of faction, and the harsh realities of civil war.

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMUIR.

No. 14.—LUCY ASHTON,

I shall never forget the first reading of the "Bride of Lammermuir." I was staying in the country in one of those large rambling houses, which ought to please a taste for architecture, as they combine every variety. There was enough remaining of hoar antiquity, to contrast strongly with the comforts of modern life. There was a large old hall and spiral staircase of black oak, hung round with family portraits, grim and faded. There were long corridors, suites of rooms which were shut up, and the reputation of the library was far from good. The house had been uninhabited for years, and its present possessor was just come into possession and from the continent, while a few of the rooms had been hastily fitted up for the reception of himself and his wife. It was an odd contrast to go from the drawing-room, crowded with sofas, ottomans, looking-glass, hot-house

plants, and tables covered with books and toys, into any of the other apartments. Mine was peculiarly dreary—the bed was of green velvet, black with time, and with those old-fashioned plumes at the corner, which resemble the decorations of a hearse. The chimney-piece was of dark wood, carved with grotesque faces, and an enormous press of the same material might have contained two or three skeletons, or manuscripts enough to have recorded every murder in the country. A large cedar grew so near to the window, that some of the small boughs touched the glass—and when the wind was high, a cry almost like that of human suffering came from the branches. The candles on my table did little more than cast a charmed circle of light around myself; but an enormous wood-fire sent occasional gleams around the gloomy room, giving to every object it touched that fantastic seeming peculiar to firelight. I had left the drawing-room early—

> " E'en in the sunniest climes,
> Light breezes will ruffle the flowers sometimes,"

and my host and his lady had disagreed about a dinner in the neighbourhood—the lady wished to go, the gentlemen did not. Retreat in such cases is the only plan for a prudent third party, before either thinks of appealing to you. If you give an

opinion in favour of one, you still offend both; for it is a physological quality in quarrels conjugal, that though each considers the other to blame, they will not allow you to think so too; moreover, the chances are, that, in your own private opinion, they are both wrong—a most unpopular verdict to pronounce. I, therefore, complained of fatigue, caught up a book, and went to my own room. That book was the "Bride of Lammermuir."

I had only, a few evenings before, read the "Mysteries of Udolpho," but cannot say that their much-talked-of terrors had the least effect upon my nerves. I was tired, but if their pages gave me sleep, they did not add dreams. But I read the volume of to-night, till the most absolute terror took possession of me. I felt myself cold and pale. I involuntarily drew nearer to the candles with a sense of security. I avoided looking towards the darker parts of the room; and I remember putting out one light, lest they should not last till morning. If I had sat up all night, I could not have gone to bed in the dark. Yet, in spite of the protection of the candle, I started from my sleep twenty times, so vividly were the scenes impressed upon my mind. It haunted me for days and days. It is even now on my memory like a terrific dream.

The "Bride of Lammermuir" is one of the

finest of Scott's conceptions—it belongs to the highest order of poetry—it combines the terrible and the beautiful. That Fate, so powerful and so grand an element in the Greek drama, pervades the Scottish tragedy. Few are the beliefs, still fewer the superstitions of to-day. We pretend to account for everything, till we do not believe enough for that humility so essential to moral discipline. But the dark creed of the fatalist still holds its ground—there is that within us, which dares not deny what, in the still depths of the soul, we feel to have a mysterious predominance. To a certain degree we controul our own actions—we have the choice of right or wrong; but the consequences, the fearful consequences, lie not with us. Let any one look upon the most important epochs of his life; how little have they been of his own making—how one slight thing has led on to another, till the result has been the very reverse of our calculations. Our emotions, how little are they under our own controul! how often has the blanched lip, or the flushed cheek, betrayed what the will was strong to conceal! Of all our sensations, love is the one which has most the stamp of Fate. What a mere chance usually leads to our meeting the person destined to alter the whole current of our life. What a mystery even to ourselves the influence which they exercise over us. Why should we feel so differently towards them, to what we ever felt

before? An attachment is an epoch in existence—it leads to casting off old ties, that, till then, had seemed our dearest; it begins new duties; often, in a woman especially, changes the whole character; and yet, whether in its beginning, its continuance or its end, love is as little within our power as the wind that passes, of which no man knows whither it goeth or whence it comes. All that mortal resolve can effect, is to do the best under the circumstances in which we are placed, to keep alive the sweet voice of approval in our hearts, and trust that the grave will be but the bright gate opening on all that we now see through a glass darkly.

The ancients believed that the dark ministry of fate was on many a kingly line even to its close—a belief confirmed by the judaical ritual. "I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation." The house of Ravenswood is doomed to destruction. Its chiefs have been men strong and evil in the land—the blood of the victim has not sunk into the earth—and the cry of the oppressed has not risen on the morning in vain. The dark sand has run to the appointed hour, and the proud and stately race will soon be a desolation whose place no man knoweth. But it is one of the mysteries of mortality that the wicked fall, and with them perish the innocent. Is it that remorse may be added to

the bitterness of punishment! The fated house falls, and with it the lovely and fragile flower that had rashly clung to the decaying wall. There is something so gentle, so touching in Lucy Ashton, that we marvel how human being could be found to visit one so soft, too roughly. But that wonder ceases in the presence of those human demons, hatred, pride, and revenge. Lucy is but one of these tender blossoms crushed without care on our daily path. Though, from her vivid imagination, likely to love a man like Ravensworth, she was unfit to be his wife; still more unfit to struggle with the difficulties attendant on an engagement which the heart kept but too truly. The moral change is exquisitely developed. First, there is the pensive girl, pensive because—

"In youth sad fancies we affect;"

then comes a brief season of love whose very happiness

"Might make the heart afraid;"

then regret, restraint, and unkindliness. Visionary terrors heighten the doubts, that he, for whose sake she endures all this, holds the sacrifice light. The domestic persecution—persecution the hardest to bear—goes on, eyes that once looked love, now turn on her in anger or disdain. The temper gives way, then the mind. Echo

answers "where?".when too late, the repentant father asks for his gentle, his affectionate child! Well might Henry Ashton remember to the day of his death, that the last time his sister's arm pressed him, it was damp and cold as sepulchral marble.

IVANHOE.

No. 15.—REBECCA.

THE character of Rebecca stands pre-eminent amid Scott's finest conceptions. Its nobility was at once acknowledged. If there be one thing which redeems our fallen nature, which attests that its origin was from heaven and its early home in paradise, it is the generous sympathy that, even in the most hardened and worldly, warms in the presence of the good and of the beautiful. There must have been, even in those whose course has darkened into crime, an innocent and hopeful time, and the light of that hour, however perverted and shadowed, is never quite extinguished. Enough remains to kindle, if but for a moment, the electric admiration whose flash, like the lightning, is from above. Fiction is but moulding together the materials collected by every day, in real as well as imagined life; the highest order of excellence carries the impulse along with it. Nature and fortune have this earth for their place of contention, and the victory is too often with the latter. We are tempted and we fall—

we lack resolution to act upon the promptings of our better and inward self; the iron enters into the soul, the wings of our nobler aspirations melt in the heat of exertion, the dust of the highway choaks our finer breathing, and if at any time we are fain to pause and commune with ourselves, alas! what do we find ourselves to be? low, weak, selfish, and old—how different from what we once hoped to be. But nature is never quite subdued to what she works in; the divine essence will at times re-assert its divinity, and hence the homage that is of love rises to that which is above us—to Beauty and to Truth.

The characteristic of Rebecca is high-mindedness, born of self reliance. From a very infant she must have been "a being drawing thoughtful breath;" As is the case with all Scott's favourite delineations, she is the only child of a widower, and the death of her mother must have flung an early shadow over her path; from her infancy she must have learnt to be alone—solitude which enervates the weak, feeds and invigorates the strong mind. Her studies, too, were well calculated to develop her powers; skilled in the art of healing she knew the delight of usefulness, and she learnt to pity because familiar with suffering. No one, not even the most careless, can stand beside the bed of sickness and of death without learning their sad and solemn lessons. Within her home she was

surrounded by luxury and that refinement which is the poetry of riches; but she knew that Danger stood at the threshold, and that Fear was the unbidden guest who peered through their silken hangings. The timid temper lives in perpetual terror, the nobler one braces itself to endure whenever the appointed time shall come. History offers no picture more extraordinary than the condition of the Jews during the middle ages. Their torture and their destruction was deemed an acceptable sacrifice to that Saviour who was born of their race, and whose sermon on the Mount taught no lessons save those of peace and love. When Madame Roland went to execution, she turned towards the statue of that power, then adored with such false worship, and exclaimed, "Oh, liberty! what crimes are wrought in thy name!" The christian might say the same of his faith; but different indeed is the religion which is of God, and that which is of man.

In that criticism, now so often the staple of conversation, I have often heard it objected, that Rebecca could not have fallen in love with Ivanhoe —that her high-toned mind would have been attracted towards the Templar. This is a curious proof of the want of interest in Scott's heroes—we feel as if their good fortune were a moral injustice. The fact is, that respect for good old rules was an inherent part of Scott's mind; whatever was "gray

with age," to him "became religion." His rich and fertile mind poured the materials of a new world into literature—but he insisted that it should take a conventional shape, and be bound by given rules. It had long been a rule that vice was to be punished and virtue rewarded in fiction, whatever it might be in real life. It is one of the many mysteries of our moral nature, that there is something in high and striking qualities that seems as it were a temptation of fate. The ancients knew this well. Moreover there are faults which almost wear virtue's seeming, and to our weakness there is a wild attraction in these very faults—but as, according to Scott's code, such faults must be duly visited in the concluding chapters, he could not invest his hero with them. The said hero is usually a brave, handsome and well conducted young man, who gives his parents and readers as little anxiety as possible. Still the circumstances under which Rebecca sees Ivanhoe are managed with Scott's utmost skill—she knows him first as the benefactor of her father—she sees him first as the victor of the tournament, and she first comes in contact with him under the tenderest relations of kindness and service. But the "why did she love him?" may in a woman's case always be answered by Byron's vindication of "Kaled's" attachment to his own gloomy hero—

——— " Curious fool, be still,
Is human love the growth of human will?"

A woman's lover is always the idol of her imagination; he is far more indebted to her for good qualities than his vanity would like to acknowledge. Rochefoucauld says, " *L'amour cessé des qu'on voit l'objet comme il est.*" But if the illusion has its own sorrow, the cure is bitterer still, " as charm by charm unwinds." I believe that more women are disappointed in marriage than men; a woman gives the whole of her heart—the man only gives the remains of his, and very often there is only a little left. Besides his idol is rarely so much the work of his own hands as her's; at the end of the first year she may ask, where are the picturesque and ennobling qualities with which she invested her lover? in nine cases out of ten echo will indeed answer " where." Why an unhappy passion is often so lasting is that it never encounters that " Ithuriel of the common-place," Reality. I like to think of Rebecca amid the olive groves of Granada. Care for her father's old age, kindliness to the poor and the suffering, and the workings of a mind strong in endurance, would bring tranquillity if not happiness, till the hand might be pressed to the subdued heart without crying " peace, peace, where is no peace!"

No. 16.—ROWENA.

ROWENA is an ingenious blending of the natural and the artificial, so generally at war with each other in society. Born timid, sweet, and yielding, she is brought up to pride, reserve, and authority. The will which had originally the pliancy of the flower spray, has become a power accustomed to dominion, and the lovely Saxon encounters opposition with astonishment "that each soft wish should not be held for law." The moment difficulties come, she has nothing to meet them with but tears, and this is what we see every day—the mask and the features are not cast in the same mould, yet the mask is worn so long that the features take its likeness. That "e'en in our ashes live our wonted fires," is not true of those sifted embers which constitute what is called society. We become things of habits and forms, "the breathing pulse of the machine" is modulated into set beatings. Donne says;—

> "Who makes the last a pattern for next year,
> Turns no new leaf, but still the same thing reads;
> Seen things he sees again, and heard things hears,
> And makes his life but like a pair of beads."

And yet this is the common routine of existence, and best that it should be so it is for those who feel too keenly, and who turn the eye on the in-

ward world and think that fate keeps her deadliest arrow in store. It is the Rebeccas not the Rowenas who go forth in the solitude of the heart. How often amid those who seem in our masquerade world to be clothed with smiles, and who hold no discourse save on "familiar matter of to-day," should we find one whose suffering might startle us—

" ——— Could we put aside
The mask and mantle that is worn by pride."

How different too would the real character be from that which is assumed; how little often do the most intimate know of each other. But the difference that the stranger might discover is nothing to that which we trace in ourselves. The burning climate of the south leaves its darkness on the cheek—the trying air of the world leaves a yet deeper darkness on the heart. To the generous, the affectionate, and the high-minded these lessons are taught more bitterly than to the calmer, colder, and more selfish temperament. But to those who sprang forth into life—love in the heart, and that heart on the lips, harsh is the teaching of experience. How has the eager kindness been repaid by ingratitude; affection has been bestowed and neglected—trust repaid by treachery, and last and worst complained, by whom have we been beloved, even as we have loved!

Ivanhoe is the first historical novel—Scott was the magician who took up the old ballad, the forgotten chronicle, and the dim tradition, saying, "Can these bones live?" He gave them breathing, brilliant, active life. No historian ever did for his country what he has done—no one ever made the past so palpably familiar to the present. Till he drew attention towards it, it is singular how little people in general knew of the English history. He has acted as master of the ceremonies between us and our forefathers, and made popular the entertainment he originated. It has been deemed an objection to the historical novel, that its coloured pages are likely to divert attention from the graver page of history. We might answer, that a reader so indolent and so unenquiring would have been likely, without such attraction, not to have read at all; but we must also draw attention to the fact of how many severely antiquarian works date their origin from the interest excited in the Waverley novels. Moreover, we must add that Ivanhoe is perfect merely as an historical picture; it gives the most accurate idea of the manners of the time. Scott has also been accused of too great a leaning towards chivalry. There was, we admit, in his own temperament, a keen sympathy with that stirring and picturesque time; but if he lost none of the brilliant colour, he also gave the reverse. Not one in ten thousand ever considered the hard and uncertain

nature of feudal tenure, till he painted the oppressions of Front de Bœuf, and the arbitrary rule supported by the Free Companies. But while a young and ardent spirit may well be permitted to kindle at the exploits of the "good knight and true," and to think highly of "marvels wrought by single hand;" yet the bane and antidote are both before us, and no one would seriously wish for that troubled and uncertain time again. No one who saw the evils, as depicted in Ivanhoe, attendant on the sway of sword and spear, would wish even their most brilliant hours back—no, not to be the victor of the tilted field, and lay his trophies at the feet of the Queen of Love and Beauty—his own chosen and fancied Rowena.

THE MONASTERY.

No. 17.—MARY AVENEL.

I HAVE lately been reading* these novels over again, with a pleasure which only those who have been placed in similar circumstances can understand. They have had the advantage of association and contrast. It has been a perpetual delight to dwell on their descriptions, and then look around and see scenes so completely their opposite, instead of the winding river, the green field, and the familiar oak and elm. I look upon the vast sea, whose dash against the rock never ceases—and on a land whose heights are covered with a wilderness of wood—and where the single trees scattered in the foreground are the cocoa nut and palm. Every page, too, has a charm almost beyond its first eager perusal—how much do they recall of the days when they were read before—how many conversations

* I began to write these papers from memory, but the kindness of Mr. Hutton, a gentleman of Cape Coast, has since supplied me with the "Works of Sir Walter Scott."

for which they furnished the material—how each different character gave its cast to its opinion, while every different volume seems to bring back the friend with whom it was the favourite. No book is fairly judged till it is read twice, and at distant periods. It is curious to note the variation of taste in ourselves. I can remember I devoured the story keenly, dwelt on all that partook of sentiment, and never questioned the depth of any remark. I now find that I take chief interest in what brings out character. I enter more into the humourous, and am every now and then tempted to analyse the truth of a deduction. I think more over what I am reading, and delight more in connecting the world of fiction with that of reality.

In the "Monastery," Scott has gone back upon that more fanciful and legendary vein, which originated the "Lay of the Last Minstrel." He admits frankly the failure in the introduction of supernatural agency—on, however, what scarcely appears to me the true ground. The supernatural has even now hold on human imagination, if it be linked with its fears, or its sentiments. Look at the effect produced in the "Bride of Lammermuir," where the agency is that of the terrible, and Scott himself points out the charm of the exquisite story of "Undine," where the fancy is awakened through the affections. But the supernatural has its keeping as well as the real. Now the White

Lady of Avenel does nothing that might not have been better effected by mere mortal agency, and the ludicrous destroys the poetical. It does not harmonize with the fanciful conception to employ it in ducking a monk, and producing a bodkin to shew that a knight was descended from a tailor's daughter; and, after all, this magic intercourse does not affect Halbert's character—he is but what the magic of circumstances alone would make of a high-spirited, brave, and intelligent youth. The same may be said of Mary Avenel—she is born on all Hallows eve—she sees her father's ghost, and the spirit linked to the fortunes of her house, but all this has no result—she is but what a maiden might well be whose birth and fortunes were so much at variance—quiet, meek and subdued, yet with that simple dignity which self-respect and early association usually give. The respect for gentle birth is a characteristic of the Scottish nation, and this if a prejudice grows out of our noblest illusions. It is a disinterested pride, taking something solemn from the dead among whom it must originate. Its chief distinctions are the guerdon of high qualities, of skill in the council, and courage in the field. The good fame of those who have gone before, seems at once the gage and incentive of our own. The common-place of to-day is coloured by the picturesque of yesterday. Never will there be poetry, generous endeavour,

or lofty standard of excellence, but among a people who take pride in the past. It is the past that redeems and elevates the present. The good worked from this feeling is beautifully shown, as calling out the kindly sense with us. In Elspeth Glendinning it takes the shape of enduring hospitality, and affectionate respect to the unfortunate. In Tibb Tackets, the bower-woman, by increased devotion to the fortunes of a family fallen from its high estate. By the by, how perfect are these two, each in her way. What can be more natural than the good dame's ejaculation, when her maternal pride and anxiety are awakened to the utmost by her son's summons, to appear before the "Abbot"—"His will be done; but an' he had but on his Sunday hose!" What more true to life than the way in which the bower-woman takes art and part in all the former glories of the family. It is the same spirit that animates Constant in his preface to the memoirs of Napoleon. His valet has some share in his victories, or as he himself most poetically intimates, "*si je ne suis pas la rose j'ai reçu pres d'elle.*" The episode, too, of Katharine, the ill-fated mistress of Julian Avenel, is the most deeply pathetic incident that ever turned on "trusting affection ill-requited." The remorse subdued by love, the painful timidity, the desire to please, constantly checked by the dread that its power is over, the sense of shame and degradation,

were never more exquisite in their truth than in this slight sketch. Another great beauty in the "Monastery," are the poetical fragments sung by the White Lady. Fanciful, full of imagery and melody—they would bear comparison with Scott's earliest and happiest efforts. Though the word effort is mistaken as applied to poetry, "it comes unbidden if it come at all." Its very writers might themselves wonder why at times harmony and imagery crowd upon the mind which, at another time, would seek them, and in vain. The presence of poetry is as mysterious and uncertain in its loveliness as the shadowy beauty of the White Lady of Avenel.

No. 18.—MYSIE HAPPER.

Scott seldom chooses a heroine from any but the upper ranks. He rarely urges that this is "the loveliest low-born lass;" he likes the lady of his choice to be unexceptionable in her quarterings, and I believe that the blot in Sir Percie Shafton's escutcheon originated in the desire to excuse the *mes-alliance*. Still the miller has a sort of poetical aristocracy—he belongs to the realm of tradition and ballad—the picturesque which the mill gives to the landscape, with its gigantic wings, and its rushing stream is, in some kind, commu-

nicated to the owner. He is connected with all that is loveliest in pastoral life, the golden cornfield, the glad harvest-home; and, if there be a beautiful bit in the country, it is where the mill rears its dusky sails. Neither has it lost its fair predominance even in our own day. The most exquisite ballad of modern production flings a new charm around the mill-dam. Need we name Mr. Tennyson's "Miller's Daughter." Now, as antiquity was the chief charm of rank with Scott, we can imagine it almost supplying its place—poetry in the case of the 'Miller's Daughter' was nearly equivalent to the peerage.

Mysie Happer's great charm is the perfect nature in the delineation; she is just a lively good-humoured girl, who has known no care, but whose naturally ready wit has been quickened by constant activity, as in Dame Glendinning's kitchen she has always been accustomed to make herself useful. Love gives the one touch of elevation to the warm and beating heart, which knew not its own sensibilities and its own powers. The depth of a woman's character is to be tested by her choice in affection; according to that preference must be her standard of perfection. Now, Sir Percie is but a feather-brained coxcomb—still Mysie's liking may well stand excused. In nine cases out of ten, the lover owes half his qualities to the imagination of his mistress; and, it must be admitted, that a proper

outside, and fair apparel, are not a bad foundation for fancy. Sir Percie's discourse, garnished with its pearls of rhetoric, seems to us marvellous nonsense, but we must remember that the miller's daughter had the great advantage of not understanding it. Now, the generality of people are very much in the situation of the courtiers in the story of Princess Sable, over whose cradle an old fairy pronounced some mysterious prediction. "The courtiers and nurses did not comprehend one word that she said; they, therefore, concluded it was something very fine, or very terrible." After all, the instinct of the heart did not deceive her—the knight of the three-piled velvet and the embroidered satin, proves brave, generous, and true. We cannot hold the delineation of Sir Percie, to be the complete failure which even its author admits it to be. This candour is one of Scott's most remarkable qualities; but, like a rich merchant, his general ventures are successful enough to admit of occasional failure. He can afford a loss. The view that he takes of the fruitlessness of an attempt to make a delineation popular, founded solely on gone-by affectation, is to a great degree true; but we must also add that the light airy cavalier required a degree of playfulness which is not one of Scott's qualities. He is, too, entirely Scotch, and wit is not a Scottish characteristic; they want the brightness, the *abandon*, the ready repartee so pe-

culiarly to both French and Irish. The Scotch are too cautious to be witty—they take thought beforehand of their answers; they are not people of impulse, and wit is an impulse. "It springs spontaneous if it spring." But then they have humour, rich, racy, sly humour, full of national character, and nearly allied to pathos. This humour Scott has in perfection. Wit belongs to the head, and humour to the heart—there is always somewhat of *inconsequence* in the character of a witty people.

What a strange page in human history is that of social distinction; no people so savage but they have a sort of fashion. Even among the wild people in whose country I am now writing, there are all the small distinctions of small gentility—for example, it is not "*comme il faut* to wear silk."

Yet, as if to vindicate the humanity of Scott's creations, we are insensibly interested in the Euphuist. I would almost accuse the reader of hard-heartedness, who does not sympathise with the knight's mortification, when the rough English soldier so remorsely reveals the ignoble parentage of his mother. We do not know a prettier scene, yet "touching withal," than where Sir Percie leaves the planner and companion of his escape to return, as he supposes, to her father. He looks back and sees her standing desolate and hopeless, with the gold chain neglected in her hand. With one deli-

cate touch is revealed the deep world of love and joy beating in her heart. When Sir Percie comes back to question of her state, look in his face she dare not; speak to him she cannot; but her feelings find expression in a timid caress, bestowed on the neck of his horse. Whatever may be Sir Percie's fortunes in the foreign land whither he is bound, at the conclusion of the story, they can never be utterly forlorn, with such a fair and faithful companion.

THE ABBOT.

No. 19.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

"Her name is a note of the nightingale." What the troubadour minstrel said of his mistress may be also said of Mary Stuart. Beauty, and all the prestige that birth gives to beauty, the far deeper interest that attends misfortune, and the abiding terror of a violent death; all these invest the memory of the ill-fated queen with a sad charm, felt to the present hour. "No man," says Brantome, "ever beheld her without love and admiration, or thought of her fate without sorrow and pity." From the cradle an evil fortune attended upon her. The birth of a first and royal child, which should have awakened joy and hope, only added keener anxiety to the death-bed of her father. "The kingdom came with a woman," said the dying monarch, dying beneath the pressure of defeat and despair, "and it will go with a woman." He knew the strong hand that was needed to curb the turbulent spirit of the time; if it had been too much for himself, who wore spur and sword, what

would it be to one made for the lute and distaff. "Let not," says the young Indian mother, in the 'Prairie,' "let not my child be a girl, for very sorrowful is the lot of woman." If this be true, and few will deny it, it is more than true in the lot of the royal orphan. The chronicles of the house of Stuart would almost justify the Grecian belief in fatality. Their doom was with them: the state —the scaffold—imprisonment and exile, crowd the annals of their race; on each high brow of their fated house is the shadow of the coming evil—the deep melancholy eyes are dark with the hours to come. It would seem as if inanity and worthlessness were their sole exemptions; the only kings whom destiny rejected as unworthy victims, were the weak James, and the profligate Charles; but in Mary, the rarest qualities and the worst fortunes of her house were united. A child, she became an exile from her native soil. In the very lowest class it is well to be bred up amid those scenes wherein our future is cast; nothing ever supplies the place of those early associations—nothing ever knits the heart to the place of its birth like the remembrances of childhood—nothing can give the entire knowledge of a people, but having been brought up among them. This is no place to enter into the long disputed question of Mary's guilt or innocence. If, as Wordsworth says,

" ——— It is a joy
To think the best we can of human kind."

it must be one to think the "best we can" of a creature so gifted. Where we cannot excuse, we may at least extenuate; palliating the faults of others is a different thing from palliating our own. Mary was brought up in a bad school. History has no darker period than the annals of the era over which Catherine presided; it combined the fiercer crimes with the meaner vices; craft and cruelty went hand in hand. From her cradle, Mary was taught to dissemble, and taught it as a science wherein superiority was matter of mental triumph. As the author of "Devereux" truly says, "it is through our weaknesses that our vices punish us." Now the great evil of Mary's life was her choice of Darnley as a husband—a choice solely dictated by his personal appearance. Had she chosen more wisely, how different might her career have been! She was too clever herself not to have felt superiority, and she had too much of the yielding natural to woman, not to have been influenced by one who had possessed that moral strength which is the secret of supremacy. Scott's picture is but a fragment—yet how finished—how excellently in keeping with our previous historical conception! We are taken in the "strong toil of grace"—we feel how surpassingly lovely was the ill-fated queen—we do not wonder at the fascina-

tion that she exercised over all that came within her "charmed circle." How well, too, the thoughtlessness, the impetuosity, and the imprudence are indicated, rather than expressed. She encourages the attachment between Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme, without one moment's consideration of what the consequent unhappiness may be from the difference in their station: she cannot repress the biting sarcasm, though next to madness in her position; and the tendency to dissemble is shown in those slight things which are the stepping-stones to more important acts. The scene where Mary signs the papers of her abdication is among Scott's very finest. The relenting of the rough old earl is full of humanity; it shows also, most strikingly, the influence of Mary's fascination. But the authority, dependent on such fascination, builds its tower of strength on the sand; favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; such an empire calls forth too much passion, and too many weaknesses; false hopes are entertained, jealousies arise, and envyings and bitterness remain—a foe is more easily made than a friend; and how difficult, or rather how impossible, so to apportion smile and word as to please rivals stimulated by every variety of vanity! It was with Mary Stuart as with Marie Antoinette, the loveliness became a snare, and hatred grew more envenomed, because made personal, from the mortification of unreasonable expectation. When

the Scottish queen said "*Adieu, plaissant pays de la France,*" she knew not that she bade adieu to her youth, and all youth's careless gladness: she knew not that she went to dwell among a people for whose habits her education had entirely unfitted her. We can imagine how unpopular the manner of her French attendants would be, with all their gaiety and light gallantry, among the stern and staid people of Scotland; how much of that unpopularity would reflect upon their mistress. Moreover, there is no difference so bitter as religious difference. Mary's catholic faith was then an object of positive horror; much, therefore, that has been alleged against her may well be set down to the violent exaggeration of party spirit; but, even were it otherwise, pity, even to pain, is the only feeling with which we can think of the melancholy prisoner, the best of whose years passed under watch and ward in the gloomy castles of Lochlevin and Fotheringham.

No. 20.—CATHERINE SEYTON.

It is not in the calm and measured paths of today that we see the more bold and pronounced characters, whose outlines have been rough-hewn by the strong hand of necessity; yet to such troubled times often belong the development of our

noblest and best qualities—the stormy gulf of Ormus throws up the finest pearls. It is not in the season of tranquility that we know aught of the generous devotion, the fertility of resource, and the forgetfulness of self often shown in the hour of trial. When the French revolution broke out, how many, only accustomed to indolence, luxury, and custom, showed that "there was iron in the rose;" and, whether at the call of duty or of affection, were prepared to bear even to the uttermost, and to exert a fortitude till then undreamed of. In such a mould is cast the character of Catherine. She has been destined for the cloister, a vocation utterly at variance with that warm heart and ready wit with which nature had gifted her: she has worked at the embroidery frame: she has told her beads, and dwelt in quiet and seclusion. The destruction of her monastery opens before her a wide and troubled world; her spirits rise as she needs their support; she finds in herself strength to endure, and courage to resist again. This time, however, of her own free will she goes into seclusion; but it is solitude animated by the consciousness of a generous devotion, and invigorated by the performance of duty. There is that which at once arrests our sympathy in Catherine Seyton's attachment to her royal mistress—it is the result of enthusiasm acting upon the most generous feelings. In those days loyalty was a creed—the right divine had its religion. To this

abstract belief, Catherine brought that personal earnestness with which the high-toned and sensitive temperament enters into all that it undertakes. This was soon heightened by that affection Mary knew so well how to inspire. It is coloured in the loveliest and loftiest light of humanity: the picture of Catherine Seyton, cheering the solitude of her imprisoned mistress with the playful gaiety of a spirit, as yet unbroken, as it is unspotted by the world. What "high resolve and constancy" is in the courage with with she plans and looks forward to escape! How true to the more generous impulses of her age is the utter disbelief of all the charges brought against the queen! Suspicion and youth are no comrades for each other. Youth is frank, eager, and prone to believe in the good; it looks round, and it sees flowers; it looks up and sees stars; evil appears impossible, because it does not seem to be in ourselves. It remains for after and weary years to teach us, that even the young and the innocent may be led into crime by the strong influence of temptation. Passion first, and interest afterwards, lures the feet of men into dark and crooked paths, which none in earlier and holier hours deemed they could tread. We may have been often deceived, but it is not until we ourselves begin to deceive that we dread deceit. There is an arch playfulness about Catherine Seyton with which Scott delights to invest his creations—they

may be less heroines, but they are more women. There is not a more delightful temper in the daily relations of life than this sweet gaiety—it brings its own sunshine—"making that beautiful which was not so," relieving the monotonous, and inspiring the sad. A gay temper is like a bright day; true, it may have its faults—a little petulance, a little wilfulness—the flush may be too ready in the cheek, and the flash too prompt in the eye; still these are only trifles to be pardoned, and we like that all the better in which we have something to forgive. The Lady Fleming says of Catherine, "Heaven pity him who shall have, one day, a creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so mischievious to torment him." He would be very well off—the meteor light would be softened and subdued when it came to burn on one only hearth. The light step, though more measured, would shed music through the house; and, somewhat sobered by time, and touched by grief, which is knowledge, the riper years of Catherine Seyton would be of those that show

"————how divine a thing,
A woman may be made."

WOODSTOCK.

No. 22.—ALICE LEE.

The history of most fictions would be far stranger than the fictions themselves; but it would be a dark and sad chronicle. Half the works that constitute the charm of our leisure, that give their own interest to the long November evening, or add to the charm of a summer noon beneath the greenwood tree, are the offspring of poverty and of pain. Dr. Johnson wrote "Rasselas" to pay the last decent respect of the living to the dead—his mother's funeral expenses. How often is the writer obliged to put his own trouble, his suffering, or his sorrow aside, to finish the task! The hand may tremble, the eyes fill with unbidden tears, and the temples throb with feverish pain, yet how often is there some hard and harsh necessity, which says, "the work must be done." Readers, in general, think little of this: they will say, "Dear! how delightful to be able to write such charming things! how it must amuse you!" I believe if there were only the author's amuse-

ment in the case it would fall very short of their own; not but that composition has its moments of keen and rapid delight when the scene rises vividly before you, and the mind is warm with the consciousness of its own powers; but these are only "angel visits," they do not form the staple of any work. Literature soon becomes a power, not, what it once was, a passion; but literary success, like all others, is only to be obtained and retained, by labour—and labour and inclination do not always go together. Take all our most eminent writers, and the quantity of work, hard work, they have got through, will be found enormous and perpetual. Literature, as a profession, allows little leisure, and less indulgence. The readers are the gainers: to them how little difference does it make that "Marmion" was written in youth, health, and prosperity; while "Woodstock" was the weary task of breaking health, and broken fortunes—their amusement is the same! But even to the most careless, a deeper interest is thrown around these volumes, and every little touch of individuality seems like the familiar intercourse of a friend. Lockhart says in the Memoir, "I know not how others interpreted various passages in 'Woodstock,' but there were not a few that carried deep meaning, for such of Scott's own friends as were acquainted with, not his pecuniary misfortunes alone, but the drooping health

of his wife, and the consolation afforded him by the dutiful devotion of his daughter Anne, in whose character and demeanour a change had occurred exactly similar to that painted in poor Alice Lee —'a light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affection, and a calm melancholy had supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others.'"

There is a very touching allusion to Miss Scott's anxiety about her father's enjoyments, in the Diary :—"Anne is practising Scottish songs, which I take as a kind of compliment to my own taste, as her's leads her chiefly to foreign music. I think the good girl sees that I want and must miss her sister's peculiar talent in singing the airs of our native country, which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make, and have always made, the most pleasing impression on me; and so, if she puts a constraint on herself for my sake, I can only say in requital, 'God bless her!'" There is sunshine in a shady place, and it is soothing to imagine the pleasure that Scott must have had while investing the creature of his imagination with the love and devotion which had been his own solace. There is a striking reality about the character of Alice Lee. They are indeed unfortunate who can recall no likeness, who are not reminded of some

actual instance of affection lightening adversity, and shedding its own sweetness over the sorrow which it could at least share. Alice Lee is among the most lovable of Scott's feminine creations. No writer possessed to a greater degree, that faculty which Coleridge so prettily describes in one line—

"My eyes make pictures when they're shut."

And every appearance of Alice Lee is a picture. We see her first in the shadowy twilight, the light step of youth subdued to the heavier tread of age; and in the dialogue that follows, with what force, and yet what delicacy, we are made acquainted with the innermost recesses of the maiden's heart! Alice is at the most interesting period of a woman's existence—when the character is gradually forming under circumstances that develop all the latent qualities. The rose has opened to the summer—the girl has suddenly become a woman.

Alice Lee's predominate feeling is attachment to her father; her love for her cousin is a gentle and quiet love; it belongs to the ease and familiarity of childhood; it is constantly subdued by a rival and holier sentiment. Alice's devotion to her father is not merely the fulfilment of a duty, it is a warmer and keener emotion—there is pity and enthusiasm blended with her filial piety—she sees the kind-hearted old man bowed by adversity, mortified in all those innocent vanities which sit

closely to every heart; his old age is deprived of those comforts with which youth may dispense—but which are hard to lose when they are, and have long been, matters both of right and habit. No wonder that his child clings to him with a deeper sadder, tenderness. Who can avoid bringing the picture home to Scott himself? his difficulties seem peculiarly adapted to awaken the most painful sympathy. They came upon him in his old age, yet were met with the noblest spirit of resistance. From the time that he felt labour to be a duty—with what unflinching earnestness did he set about that labour! Not even when working to achieve the dearest objects of his ambition—to become the master of Abbotsford—to settle an eldest and beloved son in life—did Scott exert himself as he did when the exertion was for his creditors. It seems doubly hard when we think how much others had to do with the burden whose weight was upon him even to the grave.

"Woodstock" belongs to a better time. Scott felt his powers vigorous as ever—and no one could imagine and dwell upon such a creation as Alice Lee, and not be the better and the happier. Every time she appears on the scene she brings with her an atmosphere of purity and beauty. How lovely is the scene conjured up in the little hut, when the evening disturbs, but to make musical, the silence of the forest glades; and the words of faith and

hope, cheering the gentle and maiden heart, which was their worthy temple! Again, in what a noble and high spirit is her rejection of Charles's ungenerous suit. Only one of a school, whose profligacy was the cold result of vanity, could have insulted a purity so simple and so apparent, by dishonourable affection. But it is mockery to use the word affection in such a case. I do not believe that affection can exist with truth, without the ideal, and without blending with itself all that is best and most earnest in our nature. Charles thinks far less of Alice than of the sneer of Buckingham and the jest of Rochester.

As I said before, a series of pictures might be formed of Alice in the various situations of "Woodstock." There are three which have always singularly impressed my imagination. The first is the little turret, with Dr. Rocheliffe in the little turret-chamber, when he proposes to her to make a seeming assignation with the king: there is the dignity that would light her eyes, the timidity that would colour her cheek, and the intuitive sense of right that could not for a moment tamper with its fine sense of maidenly propriety. Then the second, where she stands in the green coppice, looking, as she thinks, her last on the lover who leaves her under the most bitter perversion of her real meaning: her cheek is white as monumental marble, and her long fair curls damp with the heavy dews

—they are the faint outward sign of what is passing in her heart. The third is where, escaped from a danger which had seemed so certain, so imminent, she throws herself half in thankfulness, half in affection, into her father's arms, and then is suddenly recalled into a sweet and timid consciousness of Markham Everard's presence.

None of Sir Walter's novels end more satisfactorily than "Woodstock." There could be but one destiny for Alice—the genial and quiet circle of an English home, whose days are filled with pleasant duties, and whose sphere lies around the hearth. The devoted daughter is what she ought to be—the affectionate mother and the happy wife.

MARMION.

No. 22.—CONSTANCE.

It is a curious thing, after years have elapsed, to go back upon the pages of a favourite author. Nothing shows us more forcibly the change that has taken place in ourselves. The book is a mental mirror—the mind starts from its own face, so much freshness and so much fire has passed away. The colours and the light of youth have gone together. The judgment of the man rarely confirms that of the boy. What was once sweet has become mawkish, and the once exquisite simile appears little more than an ingenious conceit. The sentiment which the heart once beat to applaud has now no answering key-note within, and the real is perpetually militating against the imagined. It is a great triumph to the poet when we return to the volume, and find that our early creed was, after all, the true religion. Few writers stand this test so well as Sir Walter Scott. We read him at first with an eagerness impetuous as his own verse: years elapse, we again take up those living pages,

and we find ourselves carried away as before. Our choice has changed, perhaps, as to favourite passages, but we still find favourites. Scott is the epic poet of England; he does for chivalry what Homer did for the heroic age. He caught it just fading into dim oblivion, living by tradition, veiled by superstition, uncertain and exaggerated; yet not less the chaos from whence sprang the present, which must trace to that morning-checquered darkness the acquisitions and the characteristics of to-day. What constitutes the great epic poet? his power of revifying the past. It is not till a nation has gained a certain point in civilization that it desires to look back; but when action allows a breathing time for thought, and the mechanical and customary has succeeded to the adventurous and unexpected, then we desire to trace the Nile of our moral progress to its far and hidden fountains. It is this desire which is the inspiration of Walter Scott. From the dim waters he evokes the shining spirit, and from scattered fragments constructs the glorious whole. We cannot sympathize with the regret that he expresses in one of the exquisite introductions to "Marmion," when but for want of kingly countenance—

> "Dryden, in immortal strain,
> Had raised the Table Round again."

Dryden lived in an age when the political and

moral standards were set at too low a water-mark for the high tides of poetry. With the most splendid and vigorous versification, with an energy of satire and wit that had the point of the dagger and the weight of the axe, Dryden was deficient in what Scott possessed. He would have lacked the picturesque which calls up yesterday, and the sentiment which links it with to-day. The machinery of guardian angels which he proposed is enough to show that the first design was a failure. It is a great poetical mistake to revive exploded superstition. The gods are effective in Homer, because both the age of which he wrote and that in which he wrote, believed devoutly in the terrors of their thunder. But the guardian angels of England, Ireland, and Scotland—St. George, St. Patrick, and St. Andrew—could never have been more than ingenious human inventions. Scott did as much with superstition as any modern writer could venture. He gave the omen, the prophecy, and the gramarye, without which the picture he drew would have been incomplete. And what a picture he has drawn! how true, how breathing! It is England, exactly as England was: full of tumult and of adventure, but with a rude sense of justice and a dawn of information destined to produce such vast after-growth of knowledge and prosperity. No writer has the art of conveying so much by a slight intimation. Sir Hugh, the Heron bold, urges

his invitation on the English Baron, that he "may breathe his war-horse well," for—

> "The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
> And love to couch a spear.
> St. George! a stirring life they lead
> That have such neighbours near."

Wat Tinlyn gives, in three lines, an equally vivid notion of the consequences of such "pleasant pastime:"—

> "They burn'd my little lonely tower;
> The foul fiend rive their souls therefore!
> It had not been burn'd a year or more."

Not to have your house burned over your head for a twelvemonth seems an unwonted piece of domestic quiet. The metre, too, of these noble poems was admirably chosen. It is entirely English; it belongs to the period it illustrates; and the battle alone in "Marmion" may show what was its spirit and strength. It must, indeed, have rung like a silver trumpet amid the silken inanities of the Hayley and Seward school. It is quite odd now to read the sort of deprecating praise with which these poems were received by the established critical authorities. The expression of popular applause is too strong to be resisted, but while Mr. Scott's talents are universally admitted, he is constantly admonished to choose some loftier theme, as if any theme could have been better suited to a great na-

tional poet, than one belonging to the history of that country whose youth is renewed in his stirring lines.

Never did any one age produce two minds so essentially opposed as those of Byron and Scott. Byron idealised and expressed that bitter spirit of discontent which has at the present moment taken a more material and tangible form. He is the incarnation of November. From time immemorial it has been an Englishman's privilege to grumble, and Byron gave picturesque language to the universal feeling. He embodied in his heroes what is peculiarly our insular character—its shyness, its sensitiveness, and its tendency to morbid despondency. Scott, on the contrary, took the more commercial and fighting side of the character; he embodied its enterprise and resistance. The difference is strongly shown in the delineation of their two most marked heroes—"Lara" and "Marmion." Both are men, brave, unscrupulous, and accustomed to action; but Lara turns disgusted from a world which to him has neither an illusion nor a pleasure. "Marmion," on the contrary, desires to pursue his career of worldly advancement: he looks forward to increased riches and power, and indulges in no misanthropic misgivings as to the worth of the acquisition when once gained. Both are attended by a Page—that favourite creation of the olden dramatists; Byron's is little more

than the shadowy but graceful outline: Scott has worked out his creation truly and severely. The Pages in the old drama are entirely poetical creations; they occupy the debatable ground between the fanciful and the existing; they belong exclusively to the romantic in literature. They could only have been fancied when poetry delighted to hold love a creed as well as a passion. The heart called up the ideal to redeem the real, and an attachment was elevated by disinterestedness and moral beauty. There is none of this high-toned imagination in the classic fictions. Women were then considered as articles of property. The

> "Seven lovely captives of the Lesbian line,
> Skill'd in each art, unmatch'd in form divine"—

with whom Agamemnon seeks to propitiate the wrath of Achilles—hold an inferior place to the "twice ten vases of refulgent gold"—or to the twelve race-horses destined to form part of the offering. Achilles, though he protests that he loves the "beautiful captive of his spear," not only parts with her, but, what would almost have been worse to a woman, parts with her without an adieu, and she is received again in silent indifference. She departs without a farewell, and returns without a welcome. Briseïs, however, loses ground in our sympathy, by her lamentation over the body of Patroclus:—

" The first loved consort of my virgin bed,
Before these eyes in fatal battle bled:
Thy friendly hand uprear'd me from the plain,
And dried my sorrows for a husband slain.
Achilles' care you promised I should prove,
The first, the dearest partner of his love."

Certainly, the promise of a second husband may be very effective consolation for the loss of the first; still it says little for the delicacy or the constancy of the lady who was so consoled. But Christianity brought its own heaven to the things of earth; every passion was refined, and every affection exalted. Only under the purifying influence of that inward world to which it gave light, could sentiment have had its birth—and Sentiment is the tenth Muse and the fourth Grace of modern poetry.

But in the description of Constance there also is that strong perception of the actual, which is Scott's most marked characteristic. He paints her exactly what in all probability she would have been; he works out the severe lesson of retribution and of degradation. What is the current of " Marmion's mind, when "

" Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,
All lovely on his soul return'd:
Lovely, as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall;
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike, escape, pursuit;

Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms!

Such is the first picture; what is the second?

Alas! thought he, how changed that mien,
How changed those timid looks have been!
Since years of guilt and of disguise
Have arm'd the terrors of her eyes.
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantled in her cheeks:
Fierce and unfeminine are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair."

It is the strangest problem of humanity—one too, for which the closest investigation can never quite account—to trace the progress by which innocence becomes guilt, and how those who formerly trembled to think of crime, are led on to commit that at which they once shuddered. The man the most steeped in wickedness, must have had his innocent and his happy moments—a child, he must have played in the sunshine with spirits as light as the golden curls that toss on the wind. His little hands must have been clasped in prayer at his mother's knee; he must, during some moment of youth's generous warmth, have pitied human suffering, and wondered how man's blood could ever be shed by man: and if this holds good of man—how much more so of woman! But that it is one of those stern truths which experience forces us to know—we never could believe in murder as a feminine crime; yet, from the days of Clytemnestra,

down to those of Mrs. Johnson, who took her trial for murder, "looking very respectable in a black silk cloak and straw bonnet," woman has been urged on to that last and most desperate wickedness. But the causes of masculine sin are more various than those which act upon the gentler sex. A woman's crime has almost always its origin in that which was given to be the sweetest and best part of her nature—her affections: a man's influence is much greater over a woman than hers over him—almost unconsciously she models her sentiments upon his—she adopts his opinions, she acquires the greater portion of her information through his means. As to her character—by character, I would wish to express that mental bent, which, once taken, always influences, more or less, that character—"Love gave it energy, as love gave it birth." An attachment is a woman's great step in life; for the first time, she is called upon to decide; and on that decision how much of the future will rest! There are, of course, many exceptions to this rule—there are instances in which the wife has been the redeeming angel—but, in nine cases out of ten, the man raises or depresses his companion to his own moral level. I remember once staying with a lady who was robbed of a valuable gold chain. The policeman was sent for, and his first inquiry was, as to who "the maid kept company with?" for the London thieves have a regular set of lovers—and

that is how half the robberies are committed. Constance is worked out in darker colours than Scott often uses for his feminine portraits. Our sex, at least, ought to be grateful to him, for how divine is the faith he holds in all that is good in us! Even with Constance, how much the soul is "subdued by pity!"—how is the horror relieved by beauty! I know no description conveying such an idea of exquisite loveliness, as that of Constance before her judges:—

> "Her sex a page's dress belied,
> Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
> A monk undid the silken band,
> That tied her tresses fair;
> And down her slender form they spread,
> In ringlets rich and rare.
> When thus her face was given to view,
> Although so pallid was her hue,
> It did a ghastly contrast bear
> To those bright ringlets glistering fair:
> Her look composed, and steady eye,
> Bespoke a matchless constancy;
> And there she stood, so calm and pale,
> That, but her breathing did not fail,
> And motion slight of eye and head,
> And of her bosom, warranted
> That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
> You might have thought a form of wax,
> Wrought to the very life, was there,
> So still she was, so pale, so fair."

It is wonderful how much Scott contrives to suggest to the imagination. The above picture brings

Constance's previous existence so vividly to mind! The fugitive nun is again beneath the sway from whence she once fled:—she fled, timid, trusting, and hopeful; the beating heart, impatient of restraint, and confident of happiness—the lurking daring shown in the very escape; and the native courage in the resolve that could brave all the terrors of superstition: time passes on—

> "For three long years I bow'd my pride,
> A horse-boy in his train to ride."

Here again the spirit of determination is shown; Constance will not dwell alone, apart—

> "Within some lonely bower."

No; she will keep at her lover's side—in the wide and weary world she has nothing to do but to wait upon "Marmion's steps. But even that haughty spirit has its sad weak moments: Sir Hugh has

> "Often mark'd his cheeks were wet
> With tears he fain would hide."

It is a cruel proof of the want of generosity in human nature, that an affection too utterly self-sacrificing always meets with an evil return. The obligation for which we know there is no requital becomes a burden hard to be borne; we take refuge in ingratitude. Secondly, the conscience is never quite without

> "That shuddering chill
> Which follows fast on deed of ill;"

and we are glad to lay the blame on any rather than ourselves; and lastly—for small misfortunes are harder to bear than great ones—we are impatient under the minor annoyances, inevitable in consequence. Marmion had not so much exhausted his love for Constance as that he was

> " Weary to hear the desperate maid
> Threaten by turn, beseech, upbraid."

Years of misery and mortification had done their work: right and wrong were confounded together in the first instance. Constance could neither look forward nor back; she was forced to exist intensely in the present; and that is one of the worst punishments that guilt can know. Our youth is gone from us with all its kindliness, its innocent fondness, and its graceful amusements; memory can only

> " ——— lead us back
> In mournful mockery o'er the shinking track
> Of our young life, and point out every ray
> Of hope and truth we've lost upon the way."

Our future is obscure and threatening; the eyes involuntarily turn away—they can see nothing but the phantom—more terrible for its indistinctness—of slow, but certain retribution. Remorse, unattended by repentance, always works for evil—it adds bitterness and anger to error.

Such are the dark materials out of which the character of Constance is formed; we can trace its

degradation step by step—we see how the timid has grown hardened—the resolute reckless—and the affectionate only passionate. Constant contact with coarser natures has seared the finer perceptions, and the sense of right and wrong is deadened by hardship, suffering, and evil communion. The character so formed has now to be worked upon by the most fearful passion which can agitate the human heart—that which is strong as death and cruel as the grave—the passion of jealousy. The name of jealousy is often taken in vain—Henry VIII. is called jealous when he was only tyrannical; the mere desire of influence, envy and irritability of temper, are often veiled under the name of jealousy; and many a husband and wife talk of "being jealous," while in reality profoundly indifferent to each other, and only desiring a decent excuse for anger: it is oftener envy than any other feeling. But the passion of jealousy cannot exist without the passion of love, and is, like its parent, creative, impetuous, and credulous. Earth holds no misery so great as that of doubting the affection, which is dearer than life itself—and perhaps it takes its worst shape to a woman. Her attachment is to her more than it ever can be to a man. It enters into her ordinary course of existence—it belongs to the small sweet cares of every day—while it is not less the great aim and end of her being. With her, but "once to doubt" is not

"once to be resolved;" but to plunge into a chaos of small distracting fears. How much more must this be the case when the affection has been one of sacrifice and of dishonour! Constance must have watched for weary hours the slightest sign of change —she must have feared before she felt—expected long before it came—yet scarce believed when it did come. At length the fatal hour arrives; she knows that she is "betrayed and scorned." In the fearful solitude of Lindisfarne, how bitterly must she have numbered every sacrifice made to "that false knight and false lover!" Youth, innocence, hours of tender watchfulness, hope on earth, and belief in heaven—all these have been given for his sake, who leaves her to perish by a dreadful death —and, what is the worst sting of that death, leaves her for another. She has attempted the life of her rival, and failed. A darker doom yet remains; she will

> "Give him to the headsman's stroke,
> Although her heart that instant broke."

Marmion shall not live on with a fairer bride—that heart, which had been so unutterably precious to her, shall never be the resting-place of another. The fierce and daring love which has ruled her through life is with her even in death. She gave the fatal packet—

> "But to assure her soul that none
> Shall ever wed with Marmion."

There is here one exquisite touch of knowledge in feminine nature:—the grave yawns beneath her feet, opened by her lover's falsehood—her revenge has pointed the pathway to his scaffold—yet her heart turns to him with an inconsistent reliance—and menaces that dark conclave with fiery visitings if "Marmion's vengeance late should wake:" she has yet a lingering pride in the brave and powerful baron,

"First amid England's chivalry."

Scott deprecates censure on him, who

"died a gallant knight—
With sword in hand for England's right."

Still more might we deprecate it for her "who died in Holy Isle." The morality of pity is deeper and truer than that of censure. The sweetest and best qualities of our nature may be turned to evil, by the strong force of circumstance and of temptation.

Constance is but the general history of those who escape from the convent-cell of restraint, and lose the softest feathers of the dove's wing in the effort; a few feverish years flit by—and then comes the end—despair and death!—For such a grave there is but one inscription—"*Implora pace!*"

SUBJECTS FOR PICTURES.

SUBJECTS FOR PICTURES.

What seek I here to gather into words?
The scenes that rise before me as I turn
The pages of old times. A word—a name—
Conjures the past before me, till it grows
More actual than the present: that—I see
But with the common eyes of daily life,
Imperfect and impatient; but the past
Out of imagination works its truth,
And grows distinct with poetry.

I.

PETRARCH'S DREAM.

Rosy as a waking bride
By her royal lover's side,
Flows the Sorgia's haunted tide
Through the laurel grove,—
Through the grove which Petrarch gave,
All that can escape the grave—
Fame, and song, and love.

He had left a feverish bed
For the wild flowers at his head,
And the dews the green leaves shed
O'er his charmed sleep:
From his hand had dropp'd the scroll
To which Virgil left his soul
Through long years to keep.

Passion on that cheek had wrought,
Its own paleness had it brought;
Passion marks the lines of thought:
We must feel to think.
Care and toil had flung their shade
Over that bright head, now laid
By the river's brink.

Youth that, like a fever, burns;
Struggle, scorning what it earns;
Knowledge, loathing as it learns;
Worn and wasted heart!
And a song whose secrets are
In its innermost despair;—
Such the poet's part!

But what rises to efface
Time's dark shadows from that face?
Doth the heart its image trace
In the morning dream?
Yes; it is its light that shines
Far amid the dusky pines,
By the Sorgia's stream.

Flowers up-springing, bright and sweet,
At the pressure of their feet,
As the summer came to greet
Each white waving hand.
Round them kindles the dark air;
Golden with their golden hair,
Glide a lovely band.

Spirits, starry Spirits, they,
That attend the radiant day,
When the freed soul burst the clay
Of its prison wall:
Distant visions they appear;
For we only dream of, here,
Things etherial.

But one glideth gently nigh,
Human love within her eye,—
Love that is too true to die,—
That is heaven's own.
Let the angel's first look dwell
Where the mortal loved so well,
Ere yet life was flown.

To that angel-look was given
All that ever yet from heaven
Purified the earthly leaven
Of a beating heart.
She hath breathed of hope and lov
As they warm the world above;—
She must now depart.

Aye, I say that love hath power
On the spirit's dying hour,
Sharing its immortal dower,
Mastering its doom:
For that fair and mystic dream
By the Sorgia's hallowed stream,
Kindled from the tomb.

II.

THE BANQUET OF ASPASIA AND PERICLES.

Waken'd by the small white fingers,
Which its chords obey,
On the air the music lingers
Of a low and languid lay
From a soft Ionian lyre;—
Purple curtains hang the walls,
And the dying daylight falls
O'er the marble pedestals
Of the pillars that aspire,

In honour of Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride.

There are statues white and solemn,
Olden gods are they;
And the wreath'd Corinthian column
Guardeth their array.
Lovely that acanthus wreath,
Drooping round the graceful girth:
All the fairest things of earth,
Art's creations have their birth—
Still from love and death.
They are gather'd for Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride.

There are gold and silver vases
Where carved victories shine;
While within the sunlight blazes
Of the fragrant Teian wine,
Or the sunny Cyprian isle.
From the garlands on each brow
Take they early roses now;
And each rose-leaf bears a vow,
As they pledge the radiant smile
Of the beautiful Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride.

With the spoils of nations splendid
Is that stately feast;
By her youthful slaves attended—
Beauties from the East,
With their large black dewy eyes.
Though their dark hair sweeps the ground
Every heavy tress is wound
With the white sea-pearl around;
For no queen in Persia vies
With the proud Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride.

One hath caught mine eye—the fairest;
'Tis a Theban girl:
Though a downcast look thou wearest,
And nor flower nor pearl
Winds thy auburn hair among:
With a white, unsandall'd foot,
Leaning languid on thy lute,
Weareth thy soft lip, though mute,
Smiles yet sadder than thy song.
Can grief come nigh Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride?

On an ivory couch reclining
Doth the bride appear;
In her eyes the light is shining,
For her chief is near;—
And her smile grows bright to gaze
On the stately Pericles,
Lord of the Athenian seas,
And of Greece's destinies.
Glorious, in those ancient days,
Was the lover of Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride.

Round her small head, perfume breathing
Was a myrtle stem,
Fitter for her bright hair's wreathing
Than or gold or gem;
For the myrtle breathes of love.
O'er her cheek so purely white,
From her dark eyes came such light
As is, on a summer night,
With the moon above.
Fair as moonlight was Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride.

These fair visions have departed,
Like a poet's dream,
Leaving us pale and faint-hearted
By life's common stream,

Whence all lovelier light hath fled.
Not so: they have left behind
Memory to the kindling mind,
With bright fantasies combined.
Still the poet's dream is fed
By the beauty of Aspasia,
The bright Athenian bride.

III.

RIENZI SHOWING NINA THE TOMB OF HIS BROTHER.

It was hidden in a wild wood
Of the larch and pine;
It had been unto his childhood
Solitude and shrine,—
There he dream'd the hours away,
On the boughs the wood-dove hover'd
With her mournful song;
And the ground with moss was cover'd,
Where a small brook danced along
Like a fairy child at play,
Thither did Rienzi bring
The loved and lovely one;
There was the stately Nina woo'd,
There was she won.

Reeds and water-flags were growing
By the green morass;
While the fresh wild flowers were blowing
In the pleasant grass,
Cool and sweet, and very fair,
Though the wild wind planted them
With a careless wing,
Yet kind Nature granted them
All the gifts of Spring,
Nought they needed human care.

They grew lovelier in the looks
Of that lovely one;
While the Roman maid was woo'd,
While she was won.

In the pines, a soft bewailing
Stirr'd the fringed leaves,
Like a lute whose song is failing,
Loving, while it grieves
So to die upon the wind.
Ivy garlanded the laurel,
Drooping mournfully;
Poet—warrior—read the moral
Of the victor's tree,
Lonely still amid its kind!
Yet what dreams of both are blent
In the soft tale now begun,
Which the radiant Nina woo'd,
And which Nina won.

There a cypress raised to heaven
Its sepulchral head,
Like a stately column given
By the summer to the dead;—
There the young Rienzi slept.
In that grave his brother laid him,
'Neath the evening star;
While revenge and sorrow made him
What earth's great ones are;—
Long, drear vigils there he kept.
Now a sweeter one was lit
By the setting sun;
While that lady bright was woo'd,
While she was won.

By the grey cross o'er his brother,
By his heart's first care,
Did Rienzi ask another
In that heart to share.

To that maiden's feet he brought
All his early youth's affection,
All his early years;
All whose tender recollection
Only speaks in tears.
Thus to share his soul he sought:
All life's loveliest feelings grew
Round that lovely one;—
Thus was the bright Nina woo'd,
Thus was she won.

Ah! the glorious mind's aspiring
Needeth some repose—
Some sweet object for desiring,
Where its wings may close.
Wrapp'd in purple shadows, Rome
Rose afar off like a vision—
Stately, dark, and high;
But a softer one had risen
'Neath that twilight sky.
While the full heart found a home,
There were mighty words and hopes
Shared with his beloved one;
Thus was the bright Nina woo'd,
Thus was she won.

IV.

CALYPSO WATCHING THE OCEAN.

Years, years have pass'd away,
Since to yonder fated bay
Did the Hero come.
Years, years, have pass'd the while
Since he left the lovely isle
For his Grecian home.
He is with the dead—but She
Weepeth on eternally

In the lone and lovely island
Mid the far off southern seas.

Downwards floateth her bright hair,
Fair—how exquisitely fair!
But it is unbound.
Never since that parting hour
Golden band or rosy flower
In it has been wound?
There it droopeth sadly bright,
In the morning's sunny light,
On the lone and lovely island
In the far off southern seas.

Like a marble statue placed,
Looking o'er the watery waste,
With its white fixed gaze;
There the Goddess sits, her eye
Raised to the unpitying sky:
So uncounted days
Has she asked of yonder main,
Him it will not bring again
To the lone and lovely island
In the far off southern seas.

To that stately brow is given,
Loveliness that sprung from heaven—
Is, like heaven, bright:
Never there may time prevail,
But her perfect face is pale;
And a troubled light
Tells of one who may not die,
Vex'd with immortality
In the lone and lovely island
Mid the far off southern seas.

Desolate beside that strand,
Bow'd upon her cold, white hand,

Is her radiant head;
Silently she sitteth there,
While her large eyes on the air
Traced the much-loved dead:
Eyes that know not tears nor sleep,
Would she not be glad to weep,
In the lone and lovely island
Mid the far off southern seas.

Far behind the fragrant pile,
Sends its odours through the isle;
And the winds that stir
In the poplars are imbued
With the cedar's precious wood,
With incense and with myrrh,
Till the azure waves beneath
Bear away the scented breath
Of the lone and lovely island
In the far off southern seas.

But no more does that perfume
Hang around the purple loom
Where Calypso wove
Threads of gold with curious skill,
Singing at her own sweet will
Ancient songs of love;
Weary on the sea-wash'd shore,
She will sing those songs no more
In the lone and lovely island
Mid the far off southern seas.

From the large green leaves escape
Clusters of the blooming grape;
Round the shining throne
Still the silver fountains play,
Singing on through night and day,
But they sing alone:
Lovely in their early death,
No one binds a violet wreath,

In the lone and lovely island
Mid the far off southern seas.

Love and Fate—oh, fearful pair!
Terrible in strength ye are;
Until ye had been,
Happy as a summer night,
Conscious of its own sweet light,
Was that Island-queen.
Would she could forget to grieve,
Or that she could die and leave
The lone and lovely island
Mid the far off southern seas.

She is but the type of all,
Mortal or celestial,
Who allow the heart,
In its passion and its power,
On some dark and fated hour,
To assert its part.
Fate attends the steps of Love,—
Both brought misery from above
To the lone and lovely island
Mid the far off southern seas.

V.

A SUPPER OF MADAME DE BRINVILLIERS.

Small but gorgeous was the chamber
Where the lady leant;
Heliotrope, and musk, and amber,
Made an element,
Heavy like a storm, but sweet.
Softly stole the light uncertain
Through the silken fold
Of the sweeping purple curtain;
And enwrought in gold
Was the cushion at her feet.

There he knelt to gaze on her—
He the latest worshipper.

From the table came the lustre
Of its fruit and flowers;
There were grapes, each shining cluster
Bright with sunny hours,—
Noon and night were on their hues.
There the purple fig lay hidden
Mid its wide green leaves;
And the rose, sweet guest, was bidden,
While its breath receives
Freshness from the unshed dews.
Nothing marks the youth of these—
One bright face is all he sees.

With such colours as are dying
On a sunset sky;
With such odours as are sighing,
When the violets die,
Are the rich Italian wines.
Dark and bright they glow together,
In each graceful flask,
Telling of the summer weather,
And the autumn task,
When young maidens stripped the vines.
One small flask of cold pale green,
Only one, he has not seen.

When She woke the heart that slumber'd
In a poet's dream,
Few the summers he had number'd,
Little did he deem
Of such passion and such power;
When there hangs a life's emotion
On a word—a breath—
Like the storm upon the ocean,
Bearing doom and death.
Youth has only one such hour;

And its shadow now is cast
Over him who looks his last.

Does he love her?—Yes, to madness,
Fiery, fierce, and wild;
Touch'd, too, with a gentle sadness;
For his soul is mild,
Tender as his own sad song.
And that young wan cheek is wasted
With the strife within:
Well he knows his course has hasted
Through delicious sin,
Borne tumultuously along.
Never have the stars above
Chronicled such utter love.

Well the red robe folded round her
Suits her stately mien;
And the ruby chain has bound her
Of some Indian queen;—
Pale her cheek is, like a pearl.
Heavily the dusky masses
Of her night-black hair,
Which the raven's wing surpasses,
Bind her forehead fair;
Odours float from every curl.
He would die, so he might wear
One soft tress of that long hair.

Clear her deep black eyes are shining,
Large, and strangely bright;
Somewhat of the hid repining,
Gives unquiet light
To their wild but troubled glow.
Dark-fringed lids an eastern languor
O'er their depths have shed;
But the curved lip knoweth anger,
'Tis so fiercely red,—
Passion crimsons in its glow.

Tidings from that face depart
Of the death within her heart.

Does she love the boy who, kneeling,
Brings to her his youth,
With its passionate, deep feeling,
With its hope, its truth?
No; his hour has pass'd away!
Scarcely does she seek to smother
Change and scornful pride;
She is thinking of another,
With him at her side;—
He has had his day!
Love has darken'd into hate,
And her falsehood is his fate.

Even now, her hand extending,
Grasps the fated cup;
For her red lip o'er it bending,
He will drink it up,—
He will drink it to her name;
Little of the vial knowing
That has drugg'd its wave,
How its rosy tide is flowing
Onwards to the grave!
One sweet whisper from her came;
And he drank to catch her breath,—
Wine and sigh alike are death!

VI.

THE MOORISH MAIDEN'S VIGIL.

Does she watch him, fondly watch him,
Does the maiden watch in vain?
Do her dark eyes strain to catch him
Riding o'er the moonlit plain,
Stately, beautiful, and tall?

Those long eyelashes are gleaming
With the tears she will not shed;
Still her patient hope is dreaming
That it is his courser's tread,
If an olive leaf but fall.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Scarlet is the turban folded
Round the long black plaits of hair;
And the pliant gold is moulded
Round her arms that are as fair
As the moonlight which they meet.
Little of their former splendour
Lingereth in her large dark eyes;
Ever sorrow maketh tender,
And the heart's deep passion lies
In their look so sad and sweet.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Once the buds of the pomegranate
Paled beside her cheek's warm dye,
Now 'tis like the last sad planet
Waning in the morning sky—
She has wept away its red.
Can this be the Zegri maiden,
Whom Granada named its flower,
Drooping like a rose rain-laden?—
Heavy must have been the shower,
Bowing down its fragrant head.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

To the north her fancies wander,
There he dwells, her Spanish knight;
'Tis a dreadful thing to ponder,
Whether true love heard aright.
Did he say those gentle things
Over which fond memories linger,
And with which she cannot part?
Still his ring is on her finger,
Still his name is in her heart—
All around his image brings.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Can the fond heart be forsaken
By the one who sought that heart?
Can there be who will awaken
All of life's diviner part,
For some vanity's cold reign.
Heavy is the lot of woman—
Heavy is her loving lot—
If it thus must share in common
Love with those who know it not—
With the careless and the vain.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Faithless Christian!—ere the blossom,
Hanging on the myrtle bough,
Float on the clear fountain's bosom,
She who listened to thy vow—
She will watch for thee no more!
'Tis a tale of frequent sorrow
Love seems fated to renew;
It will be again to-morrow
Just as bitter and as true,
As it aye has been of yore.

Woe to thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's wave;
But the shade of rest is round thee—
And it is the grave!

VII.

THE AWAKENING OF ENDYMION.

Lone upon a mountain, the pine-trees wailing round him,
Lone upon a mountain the Grecian youth is laid;
Sleep, mystic sleep, for many a year has bound him,
Yet his beauty, like a statue's pale and fair, is undecay'd.
When will he awaken?
When will he awaken? a loud voice hath been crying
Night after night, and the cry has been in vain;
Winds, woods, and waves, found echoes for replying,
But the tones of the beloved one were never heard again.
When will he awaken?
Ask'd the midnight's silver queen.

Never mortal eye has looked upon his sleeping;
Parents, kindred, comrades, have mourned for him as dead;
By day the gathered clouds have had him in their keeping,
And at night the solemn shadows round his rest are shed.
When will he awaken?
Long has been the cry of faithful Love's imploring,
Long has Hope been watching with soft eyes fixed above;
When will the Fates, the life of life restoring,
Own themselves vanquished by much-enduring love?
When will he awaken?
Asks the midnight's weary queen.

Beautiful the sleep that she has watch'd untiring,
Lighted up with visions from yonder radiant sky,
Full of an immortal's glorious inspiring,
Softened by the woman's meek and loving sigh,
When will he awaken?

He has been dreaming of old heroic stories,
The poet's passionate world has entered in his soul;
He has grown conscious of life's ancestral glories,
When sages and when kings first uphold the mind's control.
When will he awaken?
Ask'd midnight's stately queen.

Lo! the appointed midnight! the present hour is fated;
It is Endymion's planet that rises on the air;
How long, how tenderly his goddess love has waited,
Waited with a love too mighty for despair.
Soon he will awaken!
Soft amid the pines is a sound as if of singing,
Tones that seem the lute's from the breathing flowers depart;
Not a wind that wanders o'er Mount Latmos, but is bringing
Music that is murmur'd from nature's inmost heart.
Soon he will awaken,
To his and midnight's queen!

Lovely is the green earth—she knows the hour is holy;
Starry are the heavens, lit with eternal joy;
Light like their own is dawning sweet and slowly
O'er the fair and sculptured forehead of that yet dreaming boy.
Soon he will awaken!
Red as the red rose towards the morning turning,
Warms the youth's lip to the watcher's near his own,
While the dark eyes open, bright, intense, and burning
With a life more glorious than ere they closed was known.
Yes, he has awakened
For the midnight's happy queen!

What is this old history but a lesson given,
How true love still conquers by the deep strength of truth,
How all the impulses, whose native home is heaven,
Sanctify the visions of hope, faith, and youth.
'Tis for such they waken!

When every worldly thought is utterly forsaken,
Comes the starry midnight, felt by life's gifted few;
Then will the spirit from its earthly sleep awaken
To a being more intense, more spiritual and true.
So doth the soul awaken,
Like that youth to night's fair queen!

VIII.

THE DEATH OF THE SEA KING.

Dark, how dark the morning
That kindles the sky!
But darker the scorning
Of Earl Harold's eye;
On his deck he is lying,—
It once was his throne,
Yet there he is dying,
Unheeded and lone.
There gather'd round nor follower nor foeman,
But over him bendeth a young and pale woman.

He has lived mid the hurtle
Of spears and of snow;
Yet green droops the myrtle
Where he is laid low:
The vessel is stranded
On some southern isle;
The foes that are banded
Will wait her awhile:—
Ay, long is that waiting—for never again
Will the Sea Raven sweep o'er her own northern main.

He was born on the water,
'Mid storm and 'mid strife;
Through tempest and slaughter
Was hurried his life;

Few years has he numbered,
And golden his head,
Yet the north hills are cumbered
With bones of his dead.
The combat is distant, the whirlwind is past
From the spot where Earl Harold is breathing his last.

'Tis an isle which the ocean
Has kept like a bride,
For the moonlit devotion
Of each gentler tide;
No eyes hath ere wander'd,
No step been addrest,
Where nature has squander'd
Her fairest and best.
Yet the wild winds have brought from the Baltic afar
That vessel of slaughter, that lord of the war.

He saw his chiefs stooping,
But not unto him;
The stately form drooping,
The flashing eye dim.
The wind from the nor'erd
Swept past, fierce and free;
It hurried them forward,
They knew not the sea;
And a foe track'd their footsteps more stern than the tide—
The plague was among them—they sicken'd and died.

Left last, and left lonely,
Earl Harold remain'd;
One captive—one only
Life's burden sustain'd;
She watch'd o'er his sleeping,
Low, sweetly she spoke,
He saw not her weeping,
She smiled when he woke;
Tho' stern was his bearing and haughty his tone,
He had one gentler feeling, and that was her own.

Fierce the wild winds were blowing
That drove them all night,
Now the hush'd waves are flowing
In music and light:
The storm is forsaking
Its strife with the main,
And the blue sky is breaking
Thro' clouds and thro' rain:
They can see the fair island whereon they are thrown,
Where the palms and the spice-groves rise lovely and lone.

Her bright hair is flying
Escaped from its fold,
The night-dews are drying
Away from its gold;
The op'ning flowers quiver
Beneath the soft air;
She turns with a shiver
From what is so fair.
Paler, colder the forehead that rests on her knee!
For her, in the wide world, what is there to see!

He tries—vain the trying—
To lift up his sword,
As if still defying
The Death, now his lord.
Once to gaze on the ocean,
His lips faintly stir;
But life's last emotion
Is one look on her.
Down drops on his bosom her beautiful head,—
The Earl and the maiden together lie dead!

IX.

THE LITTLE GLEANER.

Very fair the child was, with hair of darkest auburn,—
Fair, and yet sunburnt with the golden summer:
Sunshine seem'd the element from which she drew her being.
Careless from her little hand the gather'd ears are scatter'd,
In a graceful wreath the purple corn-flowers binding;
While her sweet face brightens with a sudden pleasure.
Blame not her binding: already stirs within her
All the deep emotions in the love of nature,—
Love, that is the source of the beautiful and holy.
In long-after years will memory, recalling
Sweetness undying from that early garland,
Keep the heart glad with natural devotion.
'Tis a true, sweet lesson; for, in life's actual harvest,
Much we need the flowers that mingle with our labours.
Pleasures, pure and simple, recall us to their Giver;
For ever, in its joy, does the full heart think of Heaven.

X.

THE CARRIER-PIGEON RETURNED.

Sunset has flung its glory o'er the floods,
That wind amid Ionia's myrtle woods,—
Sunset that dies a conqueror in his splendour;
  But the warm crimson ray
  Has almost sunk away
Beneath a purple twilight faint and tender.

Soft are the hues around the marble fanes,
Whose marble shines amid the wooded plains,—
Fanes where a false but lovely creed was kneeling,—
  A creed that held divine
  All that was but a sign,
The outward to the inward world appealing.

Earth was a child, and child-like, in those hours,
Full of fresh feelings, and scarce conscious powers,
Around its own impatient beauty flinging;
  These young believings were
  Types of the true and fair,—
The holy faith that Time was calmly bringing.

Still to those woods, with ruins fill'd, belong
The ancient immortality of song,—
Names and old words whose music is undying,—
  Yet do they haunt the heart
  With its divinest part,
The past that to the present is replying.

The purple ocean far beneath her feet,
The wild thyme on the fragrant hill her seat,
As in the days of old there leans a Maiden,—
  Many have watch'd before
  The breaking waves ashore,—
Faint with uncounted moments sorrow-laden.

With cold and trembling hand
She has undone the band
Around the carrier-pigeon just alighted,—
  And instant dies away
  The transitory ray
From the dark eye it had one instant lighted.

The sickness of a hope too long deferred
Sinks on her heart,—it is no longer stirred
By the quick presence of the sweet emotion,—
  Sweet even unto pain,
  With which she sees again
Her bird come sweeping o'er the purple ocean.

Woe for the watcher,—still it doth not bring
A letter nestled fragrant 'neath its wing;

There is no answer to her fond inquiring,—
Again, and yet again,
No letter o'er the main
Quiets the anxious spirit's fond desiring.

Down the ungather'd darkness of her hair
Floats, like a pall that covers her despair,—
What woman's care hath she in her adorning?
The noontide's sultry hours
Have wither'd the white flowers,
Binding its dark lengths in the early morning.

All day her seat hath been beside the shore
Watching for him who will return no more;
He thinks not of her or her weary weeping.
Absence, it is thy lot
To be too soon forgot,
Or to leave memory but to one sad keeping.

Oh, folly of a loving heart that clings
With desperate faith, to which each moment brings
Quick and faint gleams an instant's thought must smother;
And yet finds mocking scope
For some unreal hope,
Which would appear despair to any other!

She knows the hopelessness of what she seeks,
And yet, as soon as rosy morning breaks,
Doth she unloose her pigeon's silken fetter;
But thro' the twilight air
No more its pinions bear
What once so oft they brought—the false one's letter.

The harvest of the summer-rose is spread,
But lip and cheek with her have lost their red;
Theirs is the paleness of the soul's consuming—
Fretfully day by day
In sorrow worn away;
Youth, joy, and bloom have no more sure entombing.

It is a common story, which the air
Has had around the weary world to bear,
That of the trusting spirit's vain accusing;
Yet once how firm and fond
Seemed the eternal bond
That now a few brief parted days are loosing.

Close to her heart the weary pigeon lies,
Gazing upon her with its earnest eyes,
Which seem to ask—Why are we thus neglected?
It is the still despair
Of passion forced to bear
Its deep and tender offering rejected.

Poor girl! her soul is heavy with the past;
Around the shades of night are falling fast;
Heavier still the shadow passing o'er her.
The maiden will no more
Watch on the sea-beat shore—
The darkness of the grave is now before her.

XI.

ALEXANDER ON THE BANKS OF THE HYPHASIS.

Lonely by the moonlit waters
Does the conqueror stand,
Yet unredden'd by the slaughters
Of his mighty band.
Yet his laurel wants a leaf.
There he stands, sad, silent, lonely;
For his hope is vain:
He has reached that river only
To return again.
Mournful bends the matchless chief;
He—the earth's unrivalled one—
He must leave his task undone.

Far behind the camp lies sleeping—
Gods! how can they sleep,
Pale fear o'er their slumbers creeping,
With a world to weep?
With a victory to win.
There they lie in craven slumber,
By their murmurs won—
Must their earthly weakness cumber
Jove's immortal son?
From the ardent fire within,
Is there no impelling ray
To excite their onward way?

No! beside that moonlit river
Stands the soldier-king,
While he hears the night-wind shiver
With a weary wing—
With a weary sound to him;
By the numerous shadows broken
On the river's brim—
From the mirror'd stars a token
That his star is dim—
Changed and sullen they appear.
To a great and fix'd despair
All things fate and omen are.

Far away the plains are spreading
Various, dark and vast—
Where a thousand tombs are shading
Memories from the past—
He must leave them still unknown.
All the world's ancestral learning—
Secrets strange and old—
Early wisdom's dark discerning,
Must remain untold.
Mighty is the hope o'erthrown-
Mighty was the enterprise
Which upon that moment dies.

With the moonlight on them sleeping
Stands each stately palm,
Like to ancient warriors keeping
Vigil stern and calm
O'er a prostrate world below.
Sudden from beneath their shadow
Forth a serpent springs,
O'er the sands, as o'er a meadow,
Winding in dark rings.
Stately doth it glide, and slow
Like an omen in a dream,
Does that giant serpent seem.

Silvery rose those far sands shining,
Where that shade was cast—
While the king with stern repining
Watched the serpent past.
Sadly did the conqueror say—
"Would my steps were like my spirit,
I would track thy path!
What those distant sands inherit,
What this new world hath,
Should grow bright around my way.
Ah! not mine, yon glorious sphere—
My world's boundary is here!"

Pale he stood, the moonlight gleaming
In his golden hair—
Somewhat of a spirit's seeming,
Glorious and fair,
Is upon that radiant brow.
Like the stars that kindle heaven
In the sacred night,
To those blue clear eyes were given
An unearthly light,
Though the large tears fill them now;
For the Macedonian wept
As his midnight watch he kept.

In those mighty tears' o'erflowing,
Found the full heart scope
For the bitter overthrowing
Of its noblest hope;
So will many weep again.
Our aspirings have arisen
In another world;
Life is but the spirit's prison,
Where its wings are furl'd,
Stretching to their flight in vain,—
Seeking that eternal home
Which is in a world to come.

Like earth's proudest conqueror, turning
From his proudest field,
Is the human soul still yearning
For what it must yield,
Of dreams unfulfill'd and powers;
Like the great yet guided ocean
Is our mortal mind,
Stirr'd by many a high emotion,
But subdued, confined;—
Such are shadows of the hours,
Glorious in the far-off gloom,
But whose altar is the tomb!

[There is something singularly fine in Alexander's appeal to his army, when the Indian world lay before them, but more present to their fears than to their hopes. "For my own part," said the ardent conqueror, "I recognise no limits to the lahours of a high-spirited man but the failure of adequate objects." Never was more noble motto for all human achievement; and it was from a lofty purpose that the Macedonians turned back on the banks of the Hyphasis. But it is the same with all mortal enterprise: nothing is, in this world, carried out to its complete fulfilment. Our mortality predominates in a world only meant to be a passage to another.]

XII.

THE ZEGRI LADY'S VIGIL.

Ever sits the lady weeping—
Weeping night and day—
One perpetual vigil keeping,
Till life pass away,
And she join the seven who sleep.
Daylight enters not that building,
Tho' so rich and fair—
With the azure and the gilding
That are lavish'd there;
Round the purple curtains sweep,
Heavily their shadows creep
Around the Zegri Ladye—
The Ladye weeping there.

On the walls are many a sentence,
In bright letters wrought—
Touch'd not with the meek repentance
By the Gospel brought—
But the Koran's haughty words—
Words that, like a trumpet calling,
Urge the warrior on;
In the front of battle falling,
Paradise is won—
By the red and ready swords—
Can they soothe the spirit's chords
Of the lonely Zegri Ladye—
Of the Ladye weeping there!

Seven tombs are in that chamber—
Each a marble tomb:—
Lamps that breathe of musk and amber
Tremble in the gloom.
Seven lamps perfume the air.

On each tomb a statue lying,
Almost seems like life;
And, above, the banner flying
Seems to dare the strife—
Which again it may not dare.
Can the carved statues there
Suffice the Zegri Ladye—
The Ladye weeping there!

While the others fled around them,
Did the seven die.—
In the front of war she found them
With none others nigh:—
Noble was the blood they shed.
Sacred in her grief and beauty,
Did the Ladye go,
Asking life's last sacred duty
Of the Christian foe.
Those white feet were stain'd with red,
When the King bestow'd her dead
On the lovely Zegri Ladye—
The Ladye weeping there.

Never since the hour she brought them
To that ancient hall,
Since with her sad hands she wrought them
Their embroidered pall,
Hath the daylight seen her face.
Rosy o'er the Guadalquivir
Doth the morning gleam;
Pale the silver moonbeams shiver
O'er the haunted stream.
Nothing knows she of their grace—
Nothing cheers the funeral place
Of the lonely Zegri Ladye—
The Ladye weeping there.

Each of six tombs hold a brother—
All her house's pride :—
Six contain her line; one other
Riseth at her side.
Who is in that seventh tomb?
One far dearer than the others
Shares their place of rest:
Well she loved her noble brothers—
But she loved him best—
He who shared the warrior's doom
With the favour at his plume
Of the lovely Zegri Ladye—
The Ladye weeping there.

Never more when first appearing
Will he watch her eye,
In the mounted lists careering,
When his steed went by
Rapid as the lance he flung.
Never more when night is lonely
Will the warrior glide
To the citron shade, where only
He was at her side,
While the very wild wind hung
On the music of the tongue
Of the lovely Zegri Ladye—
The Ladye weeping there.

Not with daylight to discover
How the wretched weep
Will the maiden wail her lover,
Or her brothers keep
In remembrance with her tears.
Grief hath stern and silent powers,
And her house is proud;
Not to day's cold guarded hours
Is despair allow'd;
But, shut out with haughty fears,
Pride with daylight disappears,

From the lovely Zegri Ladye—
The Ladye weeping there.

But her slight frame has been shaken
By the sudden blight,
And her dark eyes are forsaken
By their former light;
Heavy is their settled gloom.
And her wan cheek beareth token
Of young life's decline;
You may see the heart is broken
By each outward sign.
Soon the heart can life consume,
Fast approaching is the tomb
Of the lonely Zegri Ladye—
Of the Ladye weeping there.

ARIADNE WATCHING THE SEA AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THESEUS.

Lonely—lonely on the shore—
Where the mighty waters roar,
Would that she could pass them o'er!
Doth the maiden stand.
Those small ivory feet are bare,
Rosy as the small shells are,
They are, than the feet, less fair
On that sea-beat strand!
Wherefore doth the girl complain?
Wind and wave will hear in vain.
Dark as is the raven's breast
Wand'ring wild in its unrest—
Like a human thought in quest
Of a future hour,
Do her raven tresses flow
Over neck and arm below,
White as is the silent snow,
Or the early flower!

Coming ere the summer sun
Colours what it shines upon.

Vainly does the west wind seek
To recall upon her cheek
How the red rose used to break
In her native isle—
Breaking with a lovely flush;
But her cheek has lost its blush
And her lip its smile:
Once how fair they used to spring
For the young Athenian King!

Desolate—how desolate—
Does the Cretan lady wait
On the beach forlorn, who late
In a palace dwelt.
They will not—the coming waves—
Watch her pleasure like the slaves
Who before her knelt;
And the least sign was command
From her slight but royal hand.

Lovely was the native bower
Where she dwelt a guarded flower,
In her other happier hour,
Ere love grew to pain.
Mid these grey rocks may she roam,
For the maiden hath no home—
None will have again.
Never more her eyes will meet
Welcôme from her native Crete.

Little did that Princess fear,
When a thousand swords were near,
Where no other was her peer,
That an hour was nigh,
When her hands would stretch in vain
Helpless to the unpitying main,
To the unpitying sky—

Earth below and heaven above
Witness to the wrongs of Love.

On the white and sounding surge,
In the dark horizon's verge,
Does a vessel seem to urge
Fast her onward way.
And the swelling canvass spread,
Glitters in the early red
Of the coming day;
'Tis as if that vessel bore
All the sunshine from the shore.

Hath the young King left her side—
She but yesterday his bride—
Who for his sake cross'd the tide,
Gave him love and life?
He hath left her far behind
To the warring wave and wind.
But what is their strife,
To the war within the heart,
Which beholdeth him depart?

She hath perill'd life and fame
Upon an all desperate game;
What availeth now her claim
On the false and fled?
Not him only hath she lost—
All the spirit treasured most
Has its lustre shed.
Let the false one cross the main,
If she could believe again.

After hours may yet restore
To the cheek the rose it wore,
And, as it has smiled before,
So the lip will smile.

Let them be however bright,
Never will they wear the light
Of their native isle.
Trusting, happy were they then—
Such they cannot be again.

Strange the heart's emotions are,
How from out of its despair
Will it summon strength to bear
Desperate wrong and woe!
But such strength is as the light
Seen upon the grave by night—
There is death below:
And the very gleam that flashes
Kindles from the heart's sweet ashes.

Maiden! gazing o'er the sea,
Wistfully, how wistfully!—
Thine such weary doom must be—
Thine the weary heart.
Woe for confidence misplaced,
For affections run to waste,
And for hopes that part—
Leaving us their farewell word,
One for ever jarring chord.

There the Cretan maiden stands,
Wringing her despairing hands,
Lonely on the lonely sands—
'Tis a woman's lot:
Only let her heart be won,
And her summer hour is done—
Soon she is forgot;
Sad she strays by life's bleak shore,
Loving, but beloved no more!

XIV.

THE TWO DEATHS.

1.—*The Death of Sigurd, the Earl of Northumberland.*

The Earl lay on his purple bed,
Faint and heavy was his head,
Where the snows of age were shed—
Heavy on his pillow.
Never more when seas are dark
Will Earl Sigurd guide his bark
Thro' the dashing billow.
Never from that bed of pain
Will the warrior rise again.

Yes, he will arise:—e'en now
Red he flushes to the brow;
Like the light before his prow
Is the dark eye's gleaming.
No: it never shall be said
Sigurd died within his bed
With its curtains streaming—
Whose sole curtain wont to be
Banners red with victory.

Lift me up, the sea-king said—
At the word his sons obey'd,
And the old man was convey'd
Where the sea was sounding,
At his ancient castle-gate,
Death's dark coming to await,
With his knights surrounding.
Morn was reddening in the sky,
As the Earl came forth to die.

In a carved oaken chair,
Carved with carving quaint and rare—
Faces strange and garlands fair—
Is the chieftain seated,

As when at some festival
In his high ancestral hall
Bards his deeds repeated.
And there was no loftier song,
Than what bore his name along.

Round him swept his mantle red,
Like a chief apparelled,
With his helmet on his head—
With its white plumes flying.
At his side the sheathed brand,
And the spear in his right hand—
Mid the dead and dying.
Where the battle raged the worst,
Ever was that right hand first.

He—the tamer of the wild—
Who invincible was styled,
Now is feeble as a child
By its mother sleeping;
But the mind is unsubdued—
Fearless is the warrior's mood,
While his eyes are keeping
This last vigil strange and lone,
That his spirit may be known.

As a ship cuts through the froth
Shining comes the morning forth,
From his own ancestral north,
While each rosy vapour
Kindles beautiful and bright,
With an evanescent light:
But the human taper
Hath an even briefer ray:
Strange, oh life, is thy decay!

Haughtily his castle stands
On a rock amid the sands,
Where the waves in gather'd bands
Day by day are dashing.

Never is the sounding shore
Still with their eternal roar,
And their strife is flashing
To the noontide's azure ight,
And the stars that watch at night.

Sigurd's look is on the foam
Where his childhood wont to roam—
For the sea has been his home
From his earliest hours—
Gathering the echoing shells,
Where the future tempest dwells,
As some gather flowers;
Trembling when a rosy boy
With a fierce and eager joy.

Many things long since forgot
In a hard and hurried lot
Now arise—they trouble not
Him, the stately hearted:
But he saw a blue-eyed maid,
Long since 'mid the long grass laid,
And true friends departed.
Tears that stand in that dark eye
Only may the sea-breeze dry.

Longer do the shadows fall
Of his castle's armed wall,
Yet the old man sits, while all
Stand behind him weeping:
But behind they stand, for he
Would not brook man's tears to see.
One fair child is sleeping—
To his grandsire's feet he crept,
Weeping silent till he slept.

Heavily beneath his mail
Seems Earl Sigurd's breath to fail,
And his pale cheek is more pale,

And his hand less steady.
Crimson are the sky and surge,
Stars are on th' horizon's verge,
Night and Death are ready!
Down in ocean goes the sun,
And Earl Sigurd's life is done!

II.—*The Death of Camoens.*

Pale comes the moonlight thro' the lattice gleaming,
Narrow is the lattice, scanty is the ray,
Yet on its white wings the fragrant dews are streaming—
Dews—oh how sweet after August's sultry day!
Narrow is the lattice—oh let night's darkness cover
Chamber so wretched from any careless eye—
Over yon pallet whatever shadows hover,
They are less dark than the shadow drawing nigh—
Death, it is thy shadow!
Let the weary one now die!

Beautiful, how beautiful!—the heavy eyes now closing
Only with the weight of the moonlight's soothing smile—
Or do they recall another hour's reposing,
When the myrtle and the moonlight were comrades the while?
Yes; for, while memory languidly is fetching
Her treasures from the depths which they have lain among,
A fragile hand—how thin—how weak—is sadly sketching
Figures and fancies that cell's white walls along.
On the lip there is a murmur—
It is the swan's last song.

Dark order of St. Dominick! thy shelter to the weary
Is like thy rule—cold, stern, unpitying in its aid;
Cold is general charity, lorn the cell and dreary—
Yet there the way-worn wretched one may rest the dying head;

Who would remember him—ah, who does remember!—
He the ill-fated, yet the young and gifted one?
Grief and toil have quench'd life's once aspiring ember:
High heaven may have pity—but man for man has none!
Close thine eyes, Camoens;
Life's task is nearly done.

Feebly his hand upon the wall is tracing
One lovely face and one face alone,
E'en the coming hour—other memories effacing—
Leaves that as fresh as when it first was known;
Faintly he traces with white and wasted fingers
What was once so lovely—what is still so dear:
Life's latest look, like its earliest one, yet lingers
On the large soft eyes that seem to meet him here;
Love's ethereal vision
Is not of Earth's dim sphere!

Large, soft, and dark, the eyes, where he has blended
So much of the soul, are somewhat like his own;
So in their youth the auburn hair descended,
Such the sad sweet smile to either red lip known.
Like were they in beauty, so the heart's light trembled
On the flushing cheek and in the kindling eye;
Yet more clearly like—the inward world resembled—
In its sweet communion—the tender and the high;
Our cold world is cruel
To rend so sweet a tie.

Thro' a weary world-path known to care and sorrow,
Still was her influence o'er his being cast;
She was the hope that whispered of to-morrow,
She was the memoried music of the past—
She was in his numbers—when those numbers breathing
Of his country's glory made it glorious more—
To its southern language long harmony bequeathing,
Haunting every wild wave dashing on its shore.
Ay, the poet's music
Is lovely as of yore.

Dream not that the love which haunts the poet's spirit
Is the common passion that sweetens daily earth:
From a world ethereal its nature must inherit
All the high imaginings that crowded round its birth;
From the pure, pale stars, amid their midnight watches,
It asks for inspiration lofty and divine;
From the small wild flowers amid the woods it catches
Charms, round the careless and the usual path to shine.
Such is the poet's passion—
Such, Camoens, was thine.

Flinging far below him each meaner thought that cumbers
Wishes born of wants, he lighted up life's dream
With the kindling light that warms the poet's numbers—
Yet are they sung by the Tajo's sunny stream.
Still was his country the theme of his inspiring,
How her bold vessels first swept the southern seas—
Still was her praise the meed of his desiring,
While telling how her heroes met the fierce and mighty breeze.
The past and its sea-triumphs—
His dreams were fill'd with these.

How was he rewarded?—how are such rewarded?
Those who thus lavish their inward wealth in vain?
Only one doom for the poet is recorded—
A present that must buy the future with its pain.
Long, long away, toss'd on the Indian billow,
Dream'd he sweet songs for his lady and his land;
Pale and wan he lies on his last neglected pillow—
None are near to minister with soft and soothing hand.
There let the poet perish—
So hath perish'd all his band.

Heavily, heavily his large black eyes are closing
On the twilight loveliness they are too faint to know;
O'er that pale high forehead a shadow is reposing—
Peace to the weary heart that languid beats below!

From that sweet lip its old songs are departed;
Take, ye wild winds, what it wont to breathe of yore—
There he is dying deserted, broken-hearted,
Like a broken lute which no music wanders o'er.
Farewell to Cameons!
The swan will sing no more.

Yet not for this in the spirit's faith I falter,
Heavy though the doom be—yet glorious is the meed.
Let the life be laid upon the fated altar—
It is but the sacrifice of an eternal creed.
Never yet was song breathed in this high believing,
But, like a star, it hath floated down time's wave!
While what lofty praises and what tender grieving
And what noble hopes, come to sanctify and save!
Even such the glory,
Camoens, by thy grave

THE DREAM IN THE TEMPLE OF SERAPIS.

"During Alexander the Great's illness, Peithon, Attalus, Demophon, Peucestas, Cleomenes, Minedas, and Seleucus, slept in the Temple of Serapis, and asked the god if it would be desirable and better for Alexander to be conveyed to the temple, and to supplicate the god, and be healed by him. The answer forbade his removal, declaring that it would be better for him to remain where he was. The companions reported this answer, and Alexander not long after expired, as if, under all circumstances, that were the better fate."—ROYAL DIARY.

THE heavy night is falling,
A dark and silent night,
And aloud the storm is calling
From the mountains' wooded height,
There is weeping in the pines.
But a voice of louder sorrow
Arises from the plain,
For the nations fear the morrow,
And ask for aid in vain,
From the old ancestral shrines
In the still and stately temple—
The temple of the god.

The kingly chiefs are seven
Who seek that ancient shrine,
To ask of night and heaven
An answer and a sign;
Pale as shadows pass they by.
They are warriors, yet they falter,
As with feet unshod
They approach thy mighty altar,
O Assyrian god!
Will the secret of the sky
Fill the stately temple—
The temple of the god?

Conquerors they enter,
In the conqueror's name;
The altar in the centre,
Burnt with undying flame—
Day and night that flame is fed.
Lamps from many a marble column
In the distance burn,
And the light is sad and solemn
As a funeral urn.
For the presence of the dead
Haunts the mystic temple—
The temple of the god.

Seven warriors were their number,
Seven future kings;
Down they laid them to their slumber
Mid the silvery rings
Of the fragrant smoke that swept
From the golden vases streaming,
With their spice and oil,
And the rich frankincense steaming,
Half a summer's spoil.
Lull'd by such perfume they slept
In the silent temple—
The temple of the god.

Lay they in that sleep enchanted,
On the marble floor;
Many things their slumber haunted,
Things that were no more.
'Twas the phantasm of life:
Fierce and rugged bands were crowding
Round their youthful king;
Shaggy hides their wild forms shrouding,
While the echoes ring
With the shouts that herald strife;
Such now wake the quiet temple—
The temple of the god.

Next, a southern noon is sleeping
On embattled lines;
There the purple robe is sweeping,
There the red gold shines.
That young chief his own has won—
He who, when his warriors tasked him,
With his heart's free scope,
What was left himself, they ask'd him,
And he answer'd, "Hope."
What he said, that hath he done;
And his glory fills the temple—
The temple of the god.

Victory is like sunshine o'er him,
Wealth is at his side,
Crowns are in the dust before him,
Earth hath bow'd her pride
At the whisper of his breath.
But that laurell'd one is dying
On a fever'd bed:
"Leave him where he now is lying,
There the king is best," it said;
Such the oracle of death,
In that fated temple—
The temple of the god.

Such the moral of his story,
Such was heaven's reply;
Amid wealth, and power, and glory,
It is best to die!
Unto all that answer came.
From the highest to the lowest
Life draws deep a wasted breath:
Fate! thy best boon thou bestowest
When thou givest death.
Each that oracle may claim,
The words of that dark temple—
The temple of the god.

DEATH-BED OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

On his bed the king was lying—
On his purple bed;*
"Tell us not that he is dying;"
So his soldiers said,
"He is yet too young to die.
Have ye drugged the cup ye gave him,†
From the fatal spring?
Is it yet too late to save him?
We will see our king!
Let his faithful ones draw nigh,
The silver-shielded warriors—
The warriors of the world!"

Back they fling the fragrant portals
Of the royal tent;‡
Vainly to the stern immortals
Sacrifice and vow were sent.§
Cold and pitiless are they!
Silent in their starry dwelling,
Nothing do they heed
Of the tale that earth is telling,
In her hour of need!

* "While Alexander was on his death-bed, the soldiers," says Arrian, "became eager to see him; some to see him once more alive, others because it was reported that he was already dead, and a suspicion had arisen that his death was concealed by the chief officers of the guards, but the majority from sorrow and anxiety for their king; they, therefore, forced their way into his chamber, and the whole army passed in procession by the bed where he lay pale and speechless."

† Plutarch mentions that one of the popular reports was, that Alexander's death was occasioned by poison administered by Iollas, his cup-bearer. This poison, the water of a mountain-spring, was of so corrosive a nature as to destroy every substance but the mule's hoof in which it was brought.

‡ Phylarchus gives a splendid account of Alexander's magnificence. His tent contained a hundred couches, and was supported by eight columns of solid gold. Overhead was stretched cloth of gold, wrought with various devices, and expanded so as to cover the whole ceiling. Within, in a semicircle, stood five hundred Persians, bearing lances adorned with pomegranates; their dress was purple and orange. Next to these were drawn up a thousand archers, partly clothed in flame-coloured, and partly in scarlet dresses. Many of these wore azure-coloured scarfs. In front of these were arranged five hundred Macedonian Argyraspides, soldiers, so called from their silver shields. In the middle was the golden throne, on which Alexander sat and gave audience. The tent on the outside was encircled by elephants drawn up in order, and by a thousand Macedonians in their native dress. Beyond these were the Persian guard of ten thousand men, and the five hundred courtiers allowed to wear purple robes.

§ Alexander's death was preceded by many omens, which sacrifice vainly strove to avert.

They have turned their face away,
Ye silver-shielded warriors,
Ye warriors of the world!

In that royal tent is weeping;
Women's tears will flow;
There the queens their watch are keeping*
With a separate woe.
One still wears her diadem—
One her long fair hair is rending,
From its pearls unbound;†
Tears from those soft eyes descending,
Eyes that seek the ground.
But Roxana looks on them,
The silver-shielded warriors,
The warriors of the world!

In the east the day was reddening,
When the warriors pass'd;
In the west the night was deadening,
As they looked their last;
As they looked their last on him—
He, their comrade—their commander—
He, the earth's adored—
He, the godlike Alexander!
Who can wield his sword?
As they went their eyes were dim,
The silver-shielded warriors,
The warriors of the world!

Slowly passed the sad procession
By the purple bed;
Every soldier in succession
Thro' that tent was led.

* After the conqueror's death, Roxana allured her gentler rival into her power, and poisoned her. She was the beautiful daughter of a barbarian chief, made captive by Alexander, who was so struck with her charms, that he immediately married her Statira was the child of Darius, and inherited the evil fortunes of her ill-fated race.

† Pearls were favourite ornaments with the Persian ladies, who often wore them wreathed in their hair.

All beheld their monarch's face—
Pale and beautiful—reclining,
There the conqueror lay,
From his radiant eyes the shining
Had not passed away.
There he watched them from his place—
His silver-shielded warriors,
His warriors of the world!

Still he was a king in seeming,
For he wore his crown;
And his sunny hair was streaming
His white forehead down.
Glorious was that failing head!
Still his golden baldric bound him,
Where his sword was hung:
Bright his arms were scattered round him,
And his glance still clung
To the warriors by his bed—
The silver-shielded warriors,
The warriors of the world!

Pale and motionless he rested,
Like a statue white and cold,
With his royal state invested;
For the purple and the gold
In his latest hour he wore.
But the eye and breath are failing,
And the mighty Soul has fled!*
Lift ye up the loud bewailing,
For a wide world mourns the Dead;
And they have a Chief no more—
The silver-shielded warriors,
The warriors of the world!

* The death of Alexander plunged all his vast empire into anarchy and slaughter. He was the soul that animated the mighty force that afterwards wasted its energies in petty warfare. The popular saying attributed to him might well be true, "That the survivors would celebrate his obsequies with bloody funeral games."

STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF MRS. HEMANS.

"The rose—the glorious rose is gone."—*Lays of Many Lands.*

Bring flowers to crown the cup and lute,—
Bring flowers,—the bride is near;
Bring flowers to soothe the captive's cell,
Bring flowers to strew the bier!
Bring flowers! thus said the lovely song;
And shall they not be brought
To her who linked the offering
With feeling and with thought?

Bring flowers,—the perfumed and the pure,—
Those with the morning dew,
A sigh in every fragrant leaf,
A tear on every hue.
So pure, so sweet thy life has been,
So filling earth and air
With odours and with loveliness,
Till common scenes grew fair.

Thy song around our daily path
Flung beauty born of dreams,
And scattered o'er the actual world
The spirit's sunny gleams.
Mysterious influence, that to earth
Brings down the heaven above,
And fills the universal heart
With universal love.

Such gifts were thine,—as from the block,
The unformed and the cold,
The sculptor calls to breathing life
Some shape of perfect mould,
So thou from common thoughts and things
Didst call a charmed song,
Which on a sweet and swelling tide
Bore the full soul along.

And thou from far and foreign lands
Didst bring back many a tone,
And giving such new music still,
A music of thine own.
A lofty strain of generous thoughts,
And yet subdued and sweet,—
An angel's song, who sings of earth,
Whose cares are at his feet.

And yet thy song is sorrowful,
Its beauty is not bloom;
The hopes of which it breathes, are hopes
That look beyond the tomb.
Thy song is sorrowful as winds
That wander o'er the plain,
And ask for summer's vanish'd flowers,
And ask for them in vain.

Ah! dearly purchased is the gift,
The gift of song like thine;
A fated doom is her's who stands
The priestess of the shrine.
The crowd—they only see the crown,
They only hear the hymn;—
They mark not that the cheek is pale,
And that the eye is dim.

Wound to a pitch too exquisite,
The soul's fine chords are wrung;
With misery and melody
They are too highly strung.
The heart is made too sensitive
Life's daily pain to bear;
It beats in music, but it beats
Beneath a deep despair.

It never meets the love it paints,
The love for which it pines;
Too much of Heaven is in the faith
That such a heart enshrines.

The meteor-wreath the poet wears
Must make a lonely lot;
It dazzles, only to divide
From those who wear it not.

Didst thou not tremble at thy fame,
And loathe its bitter prize,
While what to others triumph seemed,
To thee was sacrifice?
Oh, Flower brought from Paradise
To this cold world of ours,
Shadows of beauty such as thine
Recall thy native bowers.

Let others thank thee—'twas for them
Thy soft leaves thou didst wreathe;
The red rose wastes itself in sighs
Whose sweetness others breathe!
And they have thanked thee—many a lip
Has asked of thine for words,
When thoughts, life's finer thoughts, have touched
The spirit's inmost chords.

How many loved and honoured thee
Who only knew thy name;
Which o'er the weary working world
Like starry music came!
With what still hours of calm delight
Thy songs and image blend;
I cannot choose but think thou wert
An old familiar friend.

The charm that dwelt in songs of thine
My inmost spirit moved;
And yet I feel as thou hadst been
Not half enough beloved.
They say that thou wert faint, and worn
With suffering and with care;
What music must have filled the soul
That had so much to spare!

Oh, weary One! since thou art laid
Within thy mother's breast—
The green, the quiet mother-earth—
Thrice blessed be thy rest!
Thy heart is left within our hearts,
Although life's pang is o'er;
But the quick tears are in my eyes,
And I can write no more.

THREE EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A WEEK.

A record of the inward world, whose facts
Are thoughts—and feelings—fears, and hopes, and dreams.
There are some days that might outmeasure years—
Days that obliterate the past, and make
The future of the colour which they cast.
A day may be a destiny; for life
Lives in but little—but that little teems
With some one chance, the balance of all time:
A look—a word—and we are wholly changed.
We marvel at ourselves—we would deny
That which is working in the hidden soul;
But the heart knows and trembles at the truth:
On such these records linger.

WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN!

We might have been!—these are but common words,
And yet they make the sum of life's bewailing;
They are the echo of those finer chords,
Whose music life deplores when unavailing.
We might have been!

We might have been so happy! says the child,
Pent in the weary school-room during summer,
When the green rushes 'mid the marshes wild,
And rosy fruits, attend the radiant-somer.]
We might have been!

It is the thought that darkens on our youth,
When first experience—sad experience—teaches
What fallacies we have believed for truth,
And what few truths endeavour ever reaches.
We might have been!

Alas! how different from what we are
Had we but known the bitter path before us;
But feelings, hopes, and fancies left afar,
What in the wide bleak world can e'er restore us?
We might have been!

It is the motto of all human things,
The end of all that waits on mortal seeking;
The weary weight upon Hope's flagging wings,
It is the cry of the worn heart while breaking.
We might have been!

And when, warm with the heaven that gave it birth,
Dawns on our world-worn way Love's hour Elysian,
The last fair angel lingering on our earth,
The shadow of what thought obscures the vision?
We might have been!

A cold fatality attends on love,
Too soon or else too late the heart-beat quickens;
The star which is our fate springs up above,
And we but say—while round the vapour thickens—
We might have been!

Life knoweth no like misery; the rest
Are single sorrows,—but in this are blended
All sweet emotions that disturb the breast;
The light that was our loveliest is ended.
We might have been!

Henceforth, how much of the full heart must be
A sealèd book at whose contents we tremble?
A still voice mutters 'mid our misery,
The worst to hear, because it must dissemble—
We might have been!

Life is made up of miserable hours,
And all of which we craved a brief possessing,
For which we wasted wishes, hopes, and powers,
Comes with some fatal drawback on the blessing.
We might have been!

The future never renders to the past
The young beliefs intrusted to its keeping;
Inscribe one sentence—life's first truth and last—
On the pale marble where our dust is sleeping—
We might have been.

Necessity.

In the ancestral presence of the dead
Sits a lone power—a veil upon the head,
Stern with the terror of an unseen dread.

It sitteth cold, immutable, and still,
Girt with eternal consciousness of ill,
And strong and silent as its own dark will.

We are the victims of its iron rule,
The warm and beating human heart its tool;
And man, immortal, godlike, but its fool.

We know not of its presence, though its power
Be on the gradual round of every hour,
Now flinging down an empire, now a flower.

And all things small and careless are its own,
Unwittingly the seed minute is sown,—
The tree of evil out of it is grown.

At times we see and struggle with our chain,
And dream that somewhat we are freed, in vain;
The mighty fetters close on us again.

We mock our actual strength with lofty thought,
And towers that look into the heavens are wrought,—
But after all our toil the task is nought.

Down comes the stately fabric, and the sands
Are scatter'd with the work of myriad hands,
High o'er whose pride the fragile wild-flower stands.

Such are the wrecks of nations and of kings,
Far in the desert, where the palm-tree springs;
'Tis the same story in all meaner things.

The heart builds up its hopes, though not addrest
To meet the sunset glories of the west,
But garnered in some still, sweet-singing nest.

But the dark power is on its noiseless way,
The song is silent so sweet yesterday,
And not a green leaf lingers on the spray.

We mock ourselves with freedom, and with hope,
The while our feet glide down life's faithless slope;
One has no strength, the other has no scope.

So we are flung on Time's tumultuous wave,
Forced there to struggle, but denied to save,
Till the stern tide ebbs—and there is the grave.

Memory.

I do not say bequeath unto my soul
Thy memory,—I rather ask forgetting;
Withdraw, I pray, from me thy strong control,
Leave something in the wide world worth regretting.

I need my thoughts for other things than thee,
I dare not let thine image fill them only;
The hurried happiness it wakes in me
Will leave the hours that are to come more lonely.

I live not like the many of my kind;
Mine is a world of feelings and of fancies,
Fancies whose rainbow-empire is the mind,
Feelings that realize their own romances.

To dream and to create has been my fate,
Alone, apart from life's more busy scheming;
I fear to think that I may find too late
Vain was the toil, and idle was the dreaming.

Have I uprear'd my glorious pyre of thought,
Up to the heavens, but for my own entombing?
The fair and fragrant things that years have brought
Must they be gathered for my own consuming?

Oh! give me back the past that took no part
In the existence it was but surveying;
That knew not then of the awaken'd heart
Amid the life of other lives decaying.

Why should such be mine own? I sought it not:
More than content to live apart and lonely,
The feverish tumult of a loving lot,
Is what I wish'd, and thought to picture only.

Surely the spirit is its own free will;
What should o'ermaster mine to vain complying
With hopes that call down what they bring of ill,
With fears to their own questioning replying?

In vain, in vain! Fate is above us all;
We struggle, but what matters our endeavour?
Our doom is gone beyond our own recall,
May we deny or mitigate it?—never!

And what art thou to me,—thou who dost wake
The mind's still depths with trouble and repining?
Nothing;—though all things now thy likeness take;
Nothing,—and life has nothing worth resigning.

Ah, yes! one thing, thy memory; though grief
Watching the expiring beam of hope's last ember;
Life had one hour,—bright, beautiful, and brief,
And now its only task is to remember.

THE FUTURE.

Ask me not, love, what can be in my heart:
While gazing on thee sudden tear-drops start,
When only smiles should brighten where thou art.

The human heart is compassed by fears;
And joy is tremulous—for it inspheres
A vapoury star which melts away in tears.

I am too happy for a careless mirth;
Hence, thoughts the sweet, yet sorrowful, have birth:—
Who looks from heaven is half return'd to earth.

I feel the weakness of my love—its care;
How deep, how true, how passionate soe'er,
It cannot keep one sorrow from thy share.

How powerless is my fond anxiety!
I feel I could lay down my life for thee;
Yet know how vain such sacrifice must be!

Ah, the sweet present!—should it not suffice?
Not to humanity which vainly tries
To lift the curtain that may never rise!

Hence do we tremble in our happiness;
Hurried and dim the unknown moments press;—
We question of the grief we cannot guess.

The Future is more present than the Past:
For one look back, a thousand on we cast;
And hope doth ever memory outlast.

For hope, say fear. Hope is a timid thing,
Fearful and weak, and born 'mid suffering;—
At least, such hope as our sad earth can bring.

Its home, it is not here, it looks beyond;
And while it carries an enchanter's wand,
Its spells are conscious of their earthly bond.

We almost fear the presence of our joy;
It doth tempt Fate, the stern one, to destroy,
Fate in whose hands this world is as a toy.

We dearly buy our pleasures, we repay
By some deep suffering; or they decay
Or change to pain, and curse us by their stay.

A world of ashes is beneath our feet—
Cold ashes of each beautiful deceit,
Owned by long silent hearts, that beat as ours now beat.

How can we trust our own? we waste our breath;
We heap up hope and joy in one bright wreath;—
Our altar is the grave—our priest is death.

But, ah! death is repose;—'tis not our doom,
The cold, the calm, that haunts my soul with gloom:
I tremble at the passage to the tomb.

Love mine—what depths of misery may lie
In the dark future?—I may meet thine eye,
Cold, careless, and estranged, before I die.

All grief is possible, and some is sure;
How can the loving heart e'er feel secure,
And e'er it breaks it may so much endure?

We had not lived had the past been foreshown;
Ah! merciful the shadow round us thrown.—
Thank heaven, the future is at least unknown!

A LONG WHILE AGO.

Still hangeth down the old accustomed willow,
Hiding the silver underneath each leaf,
So drops the long hair from some maiden pillow,
When midnight heareth the else silent grief;
There floats the water-lily, like a sovereign
Whose lovely empire is a fairy world,
The purple dragon-fly above it hovering,
As when its fragile ivory uncurl'd
A long while ago.

I hear the bees in sleepy music winging
From the wild thyme when they have past the noon—
There is the blackbird in the hawthorn singing,
Stirring the white spray with the same sweet tune;
Fragrant the tansy breathing from the meadows,
As the west wind bends down the long green grass,
Now dark, now golden, as the fleeting shadows
Of the light clouds pass as they wont to pass
A long while ago.

There are the roses which we used to gather
To bind a young fair brow no longer fair;—
Ah! thou art mocking us, thou summer weather,
To be so sunny, with the loved one where?
'Tis not her voice—'tis not her step—that lingers
In lone familiar sweetness on the wind;
The bee, the bird, are now the only singers—
Where is the music once with their's combined
A long while ago?

As the lorn flowers that in her pale hands perish'd
Is she who only hath a memory here.
She was so much a part of us, so cherished,
So young, that even love forgot to fear.
Now is her image paramount, it reigneth
With a sad strength that time may not subdue;
And memory a mournful triumph gaineth,
As the slow looks we cast around renew
A long while ago.

Thou lovely garden! where the summer covers
The tree with green leaves, and the ground with flowers;
Darkly the past around thy beauty hovers—
The past—the grave of our once happy hours.
It is too sad to gaze upon the seeming
Of nature's changeless loveliness, and feel
That, with the sunshine round, the heart is dreaming
Darkly o'er wounds inflicted, not to heal,
A long while ago.

Ah! visit not the scenes where youth and childhood
Pass'd years that deepen'd as those years went by;
Shadows will darken in the careless wildwood—
There will be tears upon the tranquil sky.
Memories, like phantoms, haunt me while I wander
Beneath the drooping boughs of each old tree:
I grow too sad as mournfully I ponder
Things that are not—and yet that used to be—
A long while ago.

Worn out—the heart seems like a ruin'd altar:—
Where are the friends, and where the faith of yore?
My eyes grow dim with tears—my footsteps falter—
Thinking of those whom I can love no more.
We change, and others change—while recollection
Would fain renew what it can but recall.
Dark are life's dreams, and weary its affection,
And cold its hopes—and yet I felt them all
A long while ago.

The above was addressed to a friend most deeply interested in the subject of the verses. The poem was sent with the following letter:—

"*January 5th*, 1838.

"My dearest Mrs. ———

"I enclose the lines which I have again copied in, I hope, a legible hand. I wrote them very earnestly and hastily; my heart was full of my subject: I go back upon them with a melancholy pleasure; I cannot check the belief that she is conscious of our sad remembrance.

"My dear, kind friend, from what a weary and bitter world has she escaped. I trust that her share of human happiness may be given to her sisters. God bless them and you is (saving one—perhaps a very vain one), the dearest wish of, my kindest and best friend,

"Your grateful and affectionate
"Letitia E. Landon."

EXPERIENCE.

My very heart is filled with tears! I seem
As I were struggling under some dark dream,
Which roughly bore me down life's troubled stream.

The past weighs heavily upon my soul,
A tyrant mastering me with stern control;
The present has no rest—the future has no goal.

For what can be again but what has been?
Soon the young leaf forgets its early green,
And shadows with our sunshine intervene.

Quenched is the spirit's morning wing of fire;
We calculate where once we could aspire,
And the high hope sets in some low desire.

Experience has rude lessons, and we grow
Like what we have been taught too late to know,
And yet we hate ourselves for being so.

Our early friends, where are they?—rather, where
The fond belief that actual friends there were,—
Not cold and false as all must find they are?

We love—may have been loved—but ah! how faint
The love that withers of its earthly taint,
To what our first sweet visions used to paint!

How have we been deceived, forgotten, flung
Back on our trusting selves—the heart's core wrung
By some fond faith to which we weakly clung.

Alas! our kindest feelings are the root
Of all experience's most bitter fruit;
They waste the life whose charm they constitute.

At length they harden, and we feel no more
All that was felt so bitterly before,
But with the softness is the sweetness o'er.

Of things we once enjoyed how few remain!
Youth's flowers are flung behind us, and in vain
We would stoop down to gather them again.

Why do we think of this?—bind the red wreath
Float down time's water to the viol's breath,
Wot not what those cold billows hide beneath.

We cannot do this:—from the sparkling brink
Drops the glad rose, and the bright waters shrink:
While in the midst of mirth we pause to think;—

And if we think—we sadden:—thought and grief
Are vowed companions; while we turn the leaf,
It darkens—for the brilliant is the brief.

Ah! then, farewell ye lovely things that brought
Your own Elysium hither!—overwrought
The spirit wearies with the weight of thought.

Our better nature pineth—let it be!
Thou human soul—earth is no home for thee;
Thy starry rest is in eternity!

FRAGMENTS*

AGE AND YOUTH.

"I TELL thee," said the old man, "what is life.
A gulf of troubled waters—where the soul,
Like a vexed bark, is tossed upon the waves
Of pain and pleasure, by the wavering breath
Of passions. They are winds that drive it on,
But only to destruction and despair.
Methinks that we have known some former state
More glorious than our present; and the heart
Is haunted by dim memories—shadows left
By past felicity. Hence do we pine
For vain aspirings—hopes that fill the eyes
With bitter tears for their own vanity.
Are we then fallen from some lovely star,
Whose consciousness is as an unknown curse?"

MUCH CHANGE IN A LITTLE TIME.

AND she too—that beloved child, was gone—
Life's last and loveliest link. There was her place
Vacant beside the hearth—he almost dreamed
He saw her still; so present was her thought.
Then some slight thing reminded him how far
The distance was that parted her and him.
Fear dwells around the absent—and our love
For such grows all too anxious, too much filled
With vain regrets, and fond inquietudes:
We know not Love till those we love depart.

* These fragments appeared orgiually as mottoes to the Chapters of "Ethel Churchill."

VANITY.

VANITY! guiding power, 'tis thine to rule
Statesman and vestryman—the knave or fool.
The Macedonian crossed Hydaspes' wave,
Fierce as the storm, and gloomy as the grave.
Urged by the thought, What would Athenians say,
When next they gathered on a market day?
And the same spirit that induced his toil,
Leads on the cook, to stew, and roast, and boil:
Whether the spice be mixed—the flag unfurled—
Each deems his task the glory of the world.

SUCCESS ALONE SEEN.

FEW know of life's beginnings—men behold
The goal achieved;—the warrior, when his sword
Flashes red triumph in the noonday sun;
The poet, when his lyre hangs on the palm;
The statesman, when the crowd proclaim his voice,
And mould opinion on his gifted tongue:
They count not life's first steps, and never think
Upon the many miserable hours
When hope deferred was sickness to the heart.
They reckon not the battle and the march,
The long privations of a wasted youth;
They never see the banner till unfurled.
What are to them the solitary nights,
Past pale and anxious by the sickly lamp,
Till the young poet wins the world at last
To listen to the music long his own?
The crowd attend the statesman's fiery mind
That makes their destiny; but they do not trace
Its struggle, or its long expectancy.
Hard are life's early steps; and, but that youth
Is buoyant, confident, and strong in hope,
Men would behold its threshold, and despair.

LIFE'S MASK.

Which was the true philosopher?—the sage
Who to the sorrows and the crimes of life
Gave tears—or he who laughed at all he saw?
Such mockery is bitter, and yet just:
And Heaven well knows the cause there is to weep.
Methinks that life is what the actor is—
Outside there is the quaint and gibing mask;
Beneath, the pale and careworn countenance.

THE POET'S LOT.

The poet's lovely faith creates
The beauty he believes;
The light which on his footsteps waits,
He from himself receives.

His lot may be a weary lot;
His thrall a heavy thrall;
And cares and griefs the crowd know not,
His heart may know them all:

But still he hath a mighty dower,
The loveliness that throws
Over the common thought and hour
The beauty of the rose.

HOPE.

Is not the lark companion of the spring?
And should not Hope—that sky-lark of the heart—
Bear, with her sunny song, Youth company?
Still is its sweetest music poured for love;
And that is not for me; yet will I love,
And hope, though only for her praise and tears;
And they will make the laurel's cold bright leaves
Sweet as the tender myrtle.

LOVE'S FOLLOWERS.

THERE was an evil in Pandora's box
Beyond all other ones, yet it came forth
In guise so lovely, that men crowded round
And sought it as the dearest of all treasure.
Then were they stung with madness and despair;
High minds were bowed in abject misery.
The hero trampled on his laurell'd crown,
While genius broke the lute it waked no more.
Young maidens, with pale cheeks, and faded eyes,
Wept till they died. Then there were broken hearts—
Insanity—and Jealousy, that feeds
Unto satiety, yet loathes its food;
Suicide digging its own grave; and Hate,
Unquenchable and deadly; and Remorse—
The vulture feeding on its own life-blood.
The evil's name was Love—these curses seem
His followers for ever.

THE WORLD WITHIN.

THERE was a shadow on his face, that spake
Of passion long since harden'd into thought.
He had a smile, a cold and scornful smile;
Not gaiety, not sweetness, but the sign
Of feelings moulded at their master's will.
A weary world was hidden at that heart;
Sorrow and strife were there, and it had learnt
The weary lessons time and sorrow teach;
And deeply felt itself the vanity
Of love and hope, and now could only feel
Distrust in them, and mockery for those
Who could believe in what he knew was vain.

SECRETS.

Life has dark secrets; and the hearts are few
That treasure not some sorrow from the world—
A sorrow silent, gloomy, and unknown,
Yet colouring the future from the past.
We see the eye subdued, the practised smile,
The word well weighed before it pass the lip,
And know not of the misery within:
Yet there it works incessantly, and fears
The time to come; for time is terrible,
Avenging, and betraying.

A COMPARISON.

A pretty, rainbow sort of life enough;
Filled up with vanities and gay caprice:
Such life is like the garden at Versailles,
Where all is artificial; and the stream
Is held in marble basins, or sent up
Amid the fretted air, in waterfalls,
Fantastic, sparkling; and the element,
The mighty element, a moment's toy;
And, like all toys, ephemeral.

OPINIONS.

He scorned them from the centre of his heart,
For well he knew mankind; and he who knows
Must loathe or pity. He who dwells apart,
With books, and nature, and philosophy,
May lull himself with pity; he who dwells
In crowds and cities, struggling with his race,
Must daily see their falsehood and their faults,
Their cold ingratitude, their selfishness—
How can he choose but loathe them.

LOVE'S TIMIDITY.

I do not ask to offer thee
A timid love like mine;
I lay it, as the rose is laid
On some immortal shrine.

I have no hope in loving thee,
I only ask to love;
I brood upon my silent heart,
As on its nest the dove.

But little have I been beloved,
Sad, silent, and alone:
And yet I feel, in loving thee,
The wide world is mine own.

Thine is the name I breathe to Heaven,
Thy face is on my sleep;
I only ask that love like this
May pray for thee and weep.

THE VISIONARY AND THE TRUE.

Ah! waking dreams that mock the day,
Have other ends than those
That come beneath the moonlight ray,
And charm the eyes they close.

The vision colouring the night
'Mid bloom and brightness wakes,
Banish'd by morning's cheerful light,
Which brightens what it breaks.

But dreams which fill the waking eye
With deeper spells than sleep,
When hours unnumber'd pass us by;
From such we wake and weep.

We wake, but not to sleep again,
The heart has lost its youth;
The morning light that wakes us then,
Cold, calm and stern, is truth.

RESOLVES.

What mockeries are our most firm resolves;
To will is ours, but not to execute.
We map our future like some unknown coast,
And say, "Here is an harbour, here a rock—
The one we will attain, the other shun:"
And we do neither. Some chance gale springs up
And bears us far o'er some unfathom'd sea,
Our efforts are all vain; at length we yield
To winds and waves that laugh at man's control.

WEAKNESS ENDS WITH LOVE.

I say not, regret me; you will not regret;
You will try to forget me, you cannot forget;
We shall hear of each other, ah, misery to hear
Those names from another which once were so dear!

But deep words shall sting thee that breathe of the past,
And many things bring thee thoughts fated to last;
The fond hopes that centered in thee are all dead,
The iron has entered the soul where they fed.

Of the chain that once bound me, the memory is mine,
But my words are around thee, their power is on thine;
No hope, no repentance, my weakness is o'er,
It died with the sentence—I love thee no more!

DEAR GIFTS.

Life's best gifts are bought dearly. Wealth is won
By years of toil, and often comes too late:
With pleasure comes satiety; and pomp
Is compassed round with vexing vanities:
And genius, earth's most glorious gift, that lasts
When all beside is perished in the dust—
How bitter is the suffering it endures!
How dark the penalty that it exacts!

GENTLENESS PICTURED.

A GENTLE creature was that girl,
Meek, humble, and subdued;
Like some lone flower that has grown up
In woodland solitude.

Its soil has had but little care,
Its growth but little praise;
And down it droops the timid head
It has not strength to raise.

For other brighter blooms are round,
And they attract the eye;
They seem the sunny favourites
Of summer, earth, and sky.

The human and the woodland flower
Hath yet a dearer part,—
The perfume of the hidden depths,
The sweetness at the heart.

ORNAMENTS.

BRING from the east, bring from the west,
Flowers for the hair, gems for the vest;
Bring the rich silks that are shining with gold,
Wrought in rich broidery on every fold.

Bring ye the perfumes that breathe on the rose,
Such as the summer of Egypt bestows;
Bring the white pearls from the depths of the sea—
They are fair like the neck where their lustre will be

Such are the offerings that now will be brought,
But can they bring peace to the turmoil of thought!
Can they one moment of quiet bestow
To the human heart, feverish and beating, below?

LIFE SURVEYED.

Not in a close and bounded atmosphere
Does life put forth its noblest and its best;
'Tis from the mountain's top that we look forth,
And see how small the world is at our feet.
There the free winds sweep with unfettered wing;
There the sun rises first, and flings the last,
The purple glories of the summer eve;
There does the eagle build his mighty nest;
And there the snow stains not its purity.
When we descend, the vapour gathers round,
And the path narrows: small and worthless things
Obstruct our way: and, in ourselves, we feel
The strong compulsion of their influence.
We grow like those with whom we daily blend:
To yield is to resemble.

THE DISTURBING SPIRIT.

Doubt, despairing, crime, and craft,
Are upon that honied shaft.
It has made the crowned king
Crouch beneath his suffering;
Made the beauty's cheek more pale
Than the foldings of her veil:
Like a child the soldiers kneel,
Who had mocked at flame or steel;
Bade the fires of genius turn
On their own breasts; and there burn,
A wound, a blight, a curse, a doom,
Bowing young hearts to the tomb.
Well may storm be on the sky,
And the waters roll on high,
When that passion passes by:
Earth below, and heaven above,
Well may bend to thee, O love!

FATE.

The steps of fate are dark and terrible;
And not here may we trace them to the goal.
If I could doubt the heaven in which I hope,
The doubt would vanish, gazing upon life,
And seeing what it needs of peace and rest.
Life is but like a journey during night.
We toil through gloomy paths of the unknown;
Heavy the footsteps are with pitfalls round;
And few and faint the stars that guide our way:
But, at the last, comes morning; glorious
Shines forth the light of day, and so will shine
The heaven which is our future and our home.

LOVE'S ENDING.

And this, then, is love's ending. It is like
The history of some fair southern clime:
Hot fires are in the bosom of the earth,
And the warmed soil puts forth its thousand flowers,
Its fruits of gold—summer's regality;
And sleep and odours float upon the air,
Making it heavy with its own delight.
At length the subterranean element
Bursts from its secret solitude, and lays
All waste before it. The red lava stream
Sweeps like a pestilence; and that which was
A garden for some fairy tale's young queen
Is one wild desert, lost in burning sand.
Thus is it with the heart. Love lights it up
With one rich flush of beauty. Mark the end:
Hopes, that have quarrelled even with themselves,
And joys that make a bitter memory;
While the heart, scorched and withered, and o'erwhelmed
By passion's earthquake, loathes the name of love.

AFFECTION.

THERE is in life no blessing like affection:
It soothes, it hallows, elevates, subdues,
And bringeth down to earth its native heaven.
It sits beside the cradle patient hours,
Whose sole contentment is to watch and love;
It bendeth o'er the death-bed, and conceals
Its own despair with words of faith and hope.
Life has nought else that may supply its place:
Void is ambition, cold is vanity,
And wealth an empty glitter, without love.

DOUBT.

I TELL thee death were far more merciful
Than such a blow. It is death to the heart;
Death to its first affections, its sweet hopes;
The young religion of its guileless faith.
Henceforth the well is troubled at the spring;
The waves run clear no longer; there is doubt
To shut out happiness—perpetual shade;
Which, if the sunshine penetrate, 'tis dim,
And broken ere it reach the stream below.

FAITH ILL REQUITED.

I FEEL the presence of my own despair;
It darkens round me palpable and vast.
I gave my heart unconsciously; it filled
With love as flowers are filled with early dew,
And with the light of morning.

* * * *

If he be false, he who appeared so true,
Can there be any further truth in life,
When falsehood wears such seeming?

CONFIDENCE.

Fear not to trust her destiny with me:
I can remember, in my early youth,
Wandering amid our old ancestral woods,
I found an unfledged dove upon the ground.
I took the callow creature to my care,
And fain had given it to its nest again:
That could not be, and so I made its home
In my affection, and my constant care.
I made its cage of osier-boughs, and hung
A wreath of early leaves and woodland flowers:
I hung it in the sun; and, when the wind
Blew from the cold and bitter east, 'twas screened
With care that never knew forgetfulness.
I loved it, for I petted it, and knew
Its sole dependence was upon my love.

THE WRONGS OF LOVE.

Alas, how bitter are the wrongs of love!
Life has no other sorrow so acute:
For love is made of every fine emotion,
Of generous impulses, and noble thoughts;
It looketh to the stars, and dreams of Heaven;
It nestles 'mid the flowers, and sweetens earth.
Love is aspiring, yet is humble, too:
It doth exalt another o'er itself,
With sweet heart-homage, which delights to raise
That which it worships; yet is fain to win
The idol to its lone and lowly home
Of deep affection. 'Tis an utter wreck
When such hopes perish. From that moment, life
Has in its depths a well of bitterness,
For which there is no healing.

DANGERS FACED.

My heart is filled with bitter thought,
  My eyes would fain shed tears;
I have been thinking upon past,
  And upon future years.

Years past—why should I stir the depths
  Beneath their troubled stream?
And years that are as yet to come,
  Of them I dread to dream.

Yet wherefore pause upon our way?
  'Tis best to hurry on;
For half the dangers that we fear,
  We face them, and they're gone.

A PORTRAIT.

Many were lovely there; but, of that many,
Was one who looked the loveliest of any—
The youthful countess. On her cheek the dies
Were crimson with the morning's exercise;
The laugh upon her full red lip yet hung;
And, arrow-like, light words flashed from her tongue.
She had more loveliness than beauty—hers
Was that enchantment which the heart confers.
A mouth, sweet from its smiles; a large dark eye
That had o'er all expression mastery,
Laughing the orb, but yet the long lash made
Somewhat of sadness with its twilight shade;
And suiting well the upcast look that seemed,
At times, as it of melancholy dreamed:
Her cheek was as a rainbow, it so changed
As each emotion o'er its surface ranged—
  Her face was full of feeling.

THE CORONATION.

What memories haunt the venerable pile!
It is the mighty treasury of the past,
Where England garners up her glorious dead.
The ancient chivalry are sleeping there—
Men who sought out the Turk in Palestine,
And laid the crescent low before the cross.
The sea has sent her victories: those aisles
Wave with the banners of a thousand fights.
There, too, are the mind's triumphs—in those tombs
Sleep poets and philosophers, whose light
Is on the heaven of our intellect.
The very names inscribed on those old walls
Make the place sacred.

SMALL MISERIES.

Life's smallest miseries are, perhaps, its worst:
Great sufferings have great strength: there is a pride
In the bold energy that braves the worst,
And bears proud in the bearing; but the heart
Consumes with those small sorrows, and small shames,
Which crave, yet cannot ask for sympathy.
They blush that they exist, and yet how keen
The pang that they inflict!

MEMORY.

Ah! there are memories that will not vanish;
Thoughts of the past we have no power to banish;
To shew the heart how powerless mere will,
For we may suffer, and yet struggle still.
It is not at our choice that we forget,
That is a power no science teaches yet:
The heart may be a dark and closed up tomb;
But memory stands a ghost amid the gloom!

THE FIRST DOUBT.

Youth, love, and rank, and wealth—all these combined,
Can these be wretched? Mystery of the mind,
Whose happiness is in itself; but still
Has not that happiness at its own will.
She felt too wretched with the sudden fear—
Had she such lovely rival, and so near?
Ay, bitterest of the bitter this worst pain,
To know love's offering has been in vain;
Rejected, scorn'd, and trampled under foot,
Its bloom and leaves destroyed, but not its root.
"He loves me not!"—no other words nor sound
An echo in the lady's bosom found:
It was a wretchedness too great to bear,
She sank before the presence of despair!

THE PAST.

Weep for the love that fate forbids;
Yet loves, unhoping, on,
Though every light that once illumed
Its early path be gone.

Weep for the love that must resign
The soul's enchanted dream,
And float, like some neglected bark,
Adown life's lonely stream!

Weep for the love that cannot change;
Like some unholy spell,
It hangs upon the life that loved
So vainly and so well.

Weep for the weary heart condemned
To one long, lonely sigh,
Whose lot has been in this cold world,
To dream, despair, and die!

SELF-BLINDNESS.

WHAT Shakspeare said of lovers, might apply
To all the world—" 'Tis well they do not see
The pretty follies that themselves commit."
Could we but turn upon ourselves the eyes
With which we look on others, life would pass
In one perpetual blush and smile.
The smile, how bitter!—for 'tis scorn's worst task
To scorn ourselves; and yet we could not choose
But mock our actions, all we say or do,
If we but saw them as we others see.
Life's best repose is blindness to itself.

MUSIC OF LAUGHTER.

SHE had that charming laugh which, like a song,
The song of a spring-bird, wakes suddenly
When we least look for it. It lingered long
Upon the ear, one of the sweet things we
Treasure unconsciously. As steals along
A stream in sunshine, stole its melody,
As musical as it was light and wild,
The buoyant spirit of some fairy child;
Yet mingled with soft sighs, that might express
The depth and truth of earnest tenderness.

THE ROSE.

WHY, what a history is on the rose!
A history beyond all other flowers;
But never more, in garden or in grove,
Will the white queen reign paramount again.
She must content her with remembered things,
When her pale leaves were badge for knight and earl;
Pledge of a loyalty which was as pure,
As free from stain, as those white depths her leaves
Unfolded to the earliest breath of June.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

All things are symbols; and we find
In morning's lovely prime,
The actual history of the mind
In its own early time:
So, to the youthful poet's gaze,
A thousand colours rise,—
The beautiful which soon decays,
The buoyant which soon dies.

So does not die their influence,
The spirit owns the spell;
Memory to him is music—hence
The magic of his shell.
He sings of general hopes and fears—
A universal tone;
All weep with him, for in his tears
They recognise their own.

Yet many a one, whose lute hangs now
High on the laurel tree,
Feels that the cypress's dark bough
A fitter meed would be:
And still with weariness and wo
The fatal gift is won;
Many a radiant head lies low,
Ere half its race be run.

HUMANITY ANGELIC.

If ever angels walked on weary earth
In human likeness, thou were one of them.
Thy native heaven was with thee, but subdued
By suffering life's inevitable lot;
But the sweet spirit did assert its home
By faith and hope, and only owned its yoke
In the strong love that bound it to its kind.

THE POET'S FIRST ESSAY.

It is a fearful stake the poet casts,
When he comes forth from his sweet solitude
Of hopes, and songs, and visionary things,
To ask the iron verdict of the world.
Till then his home has been in fairyland,
Sheltered in the sweet depths of his own heart;
But the strong need of praise impels him forth;
For never was there poet but he craved
The golden sunshine of secure renown.
That sympathy which is the life of fame,
It is full dearly bought: henceforth he lives
Feverish and anxious, in an unkind world,
That only gives the laurel to the grave.

GOSSIPPING.

These are the spiders of society;
They weave their petty webs of lies and sneers,
And lie themselves in ambush for the spoil.
The web seems fair, and glitters in the sun,
And the poor victim winds him in the toil
Before he dreams of danger, or of death.
Alas, the misery that such inflict!
A word, a look, have power to wring the heart,
And leave it struggling hopeless in the net
Spread by the false and cruel, who delight
In the ingenious torment they contrive.

UNAVAILING REGRET.

Farewell! and when the charm of change
Has sunk, as all must sink, in shade;
When joy, a wearied bird, begins
The wing to droop, the plume to fade;

When thou thyself, at length, hast felt
What thou hast made another feel—
The hope that sickens to despair,
The wound that time may sear, not heal;

When thou shalt pine for some fond heart
To beat in answering thine again;—
Then, false one, think once more on me,
And sigh to think it is in vain.

THE MARRIAGE VOW.

The altar, 'tis of death! for there are laid
The sacrifice of all youth's sweetest hopes.
It is a dreadful thing for woman's lip
To swear the heart away; yet know that heart
Annuls the vow while speaking, and shrinks back
From the dark future that it dares not face.
The service read above the open grave
Is far less terrible than that which seals
The vow that binds the victim, not the will:
For in the grave is rest.

GIFTS MISUSED.

Oh, what a waste of feeling and of thought
Have been the imprints on my roll of life!
What worthless hours! to what use have I turned
The golden gifts which are my hope and pride!
My power of song, unto how base a use
Has it been put! with its pure ore I made
An idol, living only on the breath
Of idol worshippers. Alas! that ever
Praise should have been what praise has been to me—
The opiate of the mind!

THE FETE.

THERE was a feast that night
And coloured lamps sent forth their odorous light
Over gold carvings, and the purple fall
Of tapestry; and around each stately hall
Were statues pale, and delicate, and fair,
As all of beauty, save her blush, were there!
And, like light clouds floating around each room,
The censers sent their breathings of perfume;
And scented waters mingled with the breath
Of flowers that died as they rejoiced in death.
The tulip, with its globe of rainbow light;
The red rose, as it languished with delight;
The bride-like hyacinth, drooping as with shame,
And the anemone, whose cheek of flame
Is golden, as it were the flower the sun,
In his noon hour, most loved to look upon.
At first the pillared halls were still and lone,
As if some fairy palace, all unknown
To mortal eye or step:—this was not long—
Wakened the lutes, and rose the sound of song;
And the wide mirrors glittered with the crowd
Of changing shapes: the young, the fair, the proud,
Came thronging in.

LOVE.

LOVE is a thing of frail and delicate growth;
Soon checked, soon fostered; feeble, and yet strong:
It will endure much, suffer long, and bear
What would weigh down an angel's wing to earth,
And yet mount heavenward; but not the less.
It dieth of a word, a look, a thought;
And when it dies, it dies without a sign
To tell how fair it was in happier hours:
It leaves behind reproaches and regrets,
And bitterness within affection's well,
For which there is no healing.

WANT OF SYMPATHY.

THESE are the things that fret away the heart—
Cold, cureless trifles; but not felt the less
For mingling with the hourly acts of life.
It is a cruel lot for the fine mind,
Full of emotions generous and true,
To feel its light flung back upon itself;
All its warm impulses repelled and chilled,
Until it finds a refuge in disdain!
And woman, to whom sympathy is life,
The only atmosphere in which her soul
Developes all it has of good and true;
How must she feel the chill!

A POET'S LOVE.

FAINT and more faint amid the world of dreams,
That which was once my all, thy image seems,
Pale as a star that in the morning gleams.

Long time that sweet face was my guiding star,
Bringing me visions of the fair and far,
Remote from this world's toil and this world's jar.

Around it was an atmosphere of light,
Deep with the tranquil loveliness of night,
Subdued and shadowy, yet serenely bright.

Like to a spirit did it dwell apart,
Hushed in the sweetest silence of my heart,
Lifting me to the heaven from whence thou art.

Too soon the day broke on that haunted hour,
Loosing its spell, and weakening its power,
All that had been imagination's dower.

The noontide quenched that once enchanted ray,
Care, labour, sorrow, gathered on the day;
Toil was upon my steps, dust on my way.

They melted down to earth my upward wings;
I half forgot the higher, better things—
The hope which yet again thy image brings.

Would I were worthier of thee? I am fain,
Amid my life of bitterness and pain,
To dream once more my early dreams again.

CHANGE.

How much of change lies in a little space!
How soon the spirits leave their youth behind!
The early green forsakes the bough; the flowers,
[ature's more fairy-like and fragile ones,
)roop on the way-side, and the later leaves
[ave artifice and culture—so the heart:
[ow soon its soft spring hours take darker hues!
nd hopes, that were like rainbows, melt in shade;
While the fair future, ah! how fair it seemed!
Grows dark and actual.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE DEAD.

Who are the Spirits watching by the dead?
Faith, from whose eyes a solemn light is shed;
And Hope, with far-off sunshine on the head.

The influence of the dead is that of Heaven;
To it a majesty of power is given,
Working on earth with a diviner leaven.

To them belongs all high and holy thought;
The mind whose mighty empire they have wrought;
And grief, whose comfort was by angels brought.

And gentle Pity comes, and brings with her
Those pensive dreams that their own light confer;
While Love stands watching by the sepulchre.

PRIDE IN TRIFLES.

Why, life, must mock itself, to mark how small
Are the distinctions of its various pride.
'Tis strange how we delight in the unreal:
The fanciful and the fantastic make
One half our triumphs. Not in mighty things—
The glorious offerings of our mind to fate
Do we ask homage to our vanities,
One half so much as from the false and vain.
The petty trifles that the social world
Has fancied into grandeur.

DEATH IN THE FLOWER.

'Tis a fair tree, the almond-tree: there Spring
Shews the first promise of her rosy wreath;
Or ere the green leaves venture from the bud,
Those fragile blossoms light the winter bough
With delicate colours heralding the rose,
Whose own Aurora they might seem to be.
What lurks beneath their faint and lovely red?
What the dark spirit in those fairy flowers?
'Tis death!

REMEMBRANCE.

Pale Memory sits lone, brooding o'er the past,
That makes her misery. She looketh round,
And asks the wide world for forgetfulness:
She asks in vain; the shadow of past hours
Close palpable around her; shapes arise—
Shadows, yet seeming real; and sad thoughts,
That make a night of darkness and of dreams.
Her empire is upon the dead and gone;
With that she mocks the present and shuts out
The future, till the grave, which is her throne,
Has absolute dominion.

INFLUENCE OF POETRY.

This is the charm of poetry: it comes
On sad perturbed moments; and its thoughts,
Like pearls amid the troubled waters, gleam.
That which we garnered in our eager youth,
Becomes a long delight in after years:
The mind is strengthened and the heart refreshed
By some old memory of gifted words,
That bring sweet feelings, answering to our own.
Or dreams that waken some more lofty mood
Than dwelleth with the common-place of life.

THE LAST NIGHT WITH THE DEAD.

How awful is the presence of the dead!
The hours rebuked, stand silent at their side;
Passions are hushed before that stern repose;
Two, and two only, sad exception share—
Sorrow and love,—and these are paramount.
How deep the sorrow, and how strong the love!
Seeming as utterly unfelt before.
Ah! parting tries their depths. At once arise
Affection's treasures, never dreamed till then.
Death teaches heavy lessons hard to bear;
And most it teaches us what we have lost,
In losing those who loved us.

CHANGES IN LONDON.

The presence of perpetual change
  Is ever on the earth;
To-day is only as the soil
  That gives to-morrow birth.

Where stood the tower there grows the weed;
  Where stood the weed the tower:
No present hour its likeness leaves
  To any future hour.

Of each imperial city built
Far on the eastern plains,
A desert waste of tomb and sand
Is all that now remains.

Our own fair city filled with life,
Has yet a future day,
When power, and might, and majesty,
Will yet have passed away.

PRESENTIMENT.

I feel the shadow on my brow,
The sickness at my heart!
Alas! I look on those I love,
And am so sad to part.

If I could leave my love behind,
Or watch from yonder sky
With holy and enduring care,
I were not loath to die.

But death is terrible to Love:
And yet a love like mine
Trusts in the heaven from whence it came,
And feels it is divine.

AGE.

Age is a dreary thing when left alone:
It needs the sunshine brought by fresher years;
It lives its youth again while seeing youth,
And childhood brings its childhood back again.
But for the lonely and the aged man
Left to the silent hearth, the vacant home
Where no sweet voices sound, no light steps come
Disturbing memory from its heaviness—
Wo for such lot! 'tis life's most desolate!
Age needeth love and youth to cheer the path—
The short dark pathway leading to the tomb.

HOPE AND LOVE.

The sun was setting o'er the sea,
A beautiful and summer sun;
Crimson and bright, as if not night,
But rather day had just begun:
That lighted sky, that lighted sea,
They spoke of Love and Hope to me.

I thought how Love, I thought how Hope,
O'er the horizon of my heart
Had poured their light like yonder sun;
Like yon sun, only to depart:
Alas! that ever suns should set,
Or Hope grow cold, or Love forget!

A NOBLE LADY.

A PALE and stately lady, with a brow
That might have well beseem'd a Roman dame,
Cornelia, ere her glorious children died;
Or that imperial mother, who beheld
Her son forgive his country at her word.
Yet there was trouble written on her face;
The past had left its darkness.

EXPERIENCE TOO LATE.

IT is the past that maketh my despair;
The dark, the sad, the irrevocable past.
Alas? why should our lot in life be made,
Before we know that life? Experience comes,
But comes too late. If I could now recall
All that I now regret, how different
Would be my choice! at best a choice of ill;
But better than my miserable past.
Loathed, yet despised, why must I think of it?

BRIDAL FLOWERS.

Bind the white orange-flowers in her hair
Soft be their shadow, soft and somewhat pale—
For they are omens. Many anxious years
Are on the wreath that bends the bridal veil.

The maiden leaves her childhood and her home,
All that the past has known of happy hours—
Perhaps her happiest ones. Well my there be
A faint wan colour on those orange-flowers:

For they are pale as hope, and hope is pale
With earnest watching over future years;
With all the promise of their loveliness,
The bride and morning bathe their wreath with tears.

THE TEMPLE GARDEN.

The fountain's low singing is heard in the wind,
Like a melody bringing sweet fancies to mind;
Away in the distance is heard the far sound
From the the streets of the city that compass it round.
Like the echo of mountains, or ocean's deep call:
Yet that fountain's low singing is heard over all.

The turf and the terrace slope down to the tide
Of the Thames, that sweeps onwards a world at its side;
And dark the horizon with mast and with sail
Of the thousand tall ships that have weather'd the gale;
While beyond the arched bridge the old abbey appears,
Where England has garnered—the glories of years.

There are lights in the casement—how weary the ray
That asks from the night time the toils of the day!
I fancy I see the brow bent o'er the page,
Whose youth wears the paleness and wrinkles of age:
What struggles, what hopes, what despair may have been,
Where sweep those dark branches of shadowy green!

THE LOST.

I did not know till she was lost,
How much she was beloved;
She knows it in that better world
To which she is removed.

I feel as she had only sought
Again her native skies;
I look upon the heavens, and seem
To meet her angel eyes.

Pity, and love, and gentle thoughts,
For her sake, fill my mind;
They are the only part of her
That now is left behind.

DESPONDENCY.

Ah, tell me not that memory
Sheds gladness o'er the past;
What is recalled by faded flowers,
Save that they did not last?
Were it not better to forget,
Than but remember and regret?

Look back upon your hours of youth—
What were your early years,
But scenes of childish cares and griefs?
And say not childish tears
Were nothing; at that time they were
More than the young heart well could bear.

Go on to riper years, and look
Upon your sunny spring;
And from the wrecks of former years,
What will your memory bring?—
Affections wasted, pleasures fled,
And hopes now numbered with the dead!

THE MIND'S UNREST.

Mind, dangerous and glorious gift!
Too much thy native heaven has left
Its nature in thee, for thy light
To be content with earthly home.
It hath another, and its sight
Will too much to that other roam;
And heavenly light and earthly clay,
But ill bear with alternate sway:
Till jarring elements create
The evil which they sought to shun,
And deeper feel their mortal state
In struggling for a higher one.
There is no rest for the proud mind,
Conscious of its high powers confined;
Vain dreams and feverish hopes arise,
It is itself its sacrifice.

IMMORTALITY.

Strong as the death it masters, is the hope
That onward looks to immortality:
Let the frame perish, so the soul survive,
Pure, spiritual and loving. I believe
The grave exalts, not separates, the ties
That hold us in affection to our kind.
I will look down from yonder pitying sky,
Watching and waiting those I love on earth
Anxious in heaven until they too are there.
I will attend your guardian angel's side,
And weep away your faults with holy tears;
Your midnight shall be filled with solemn thought:
And when, at length, death brings you to my love,
Mine the first welcome heard in paradise.

BITTER EXPERIENCE.

How often, in this cold and bitter world,
Is the warm heart thrown back upon itself!
Cold, careless, are we of another's grief;
We wrap ourselves in sullen selfishness:
Harsh-judging, narrow-minded, stern and chill
In measuring every action but our own.
How small are some men's motives, and how mean!
There are who never knew one generous thought;
Whose heart-pulse never quickened with the joy
Of kind endeavour, or sweet sympathy.—
There are too many such!

THE HEART'S OMENS.

I felt my sorrow ere it came,
As storms are felt on high,
Before a single cloud denote
Their presence in the sky.

The heart has omens deep and true,
That ask no aid from words;
Like viewless music from the harp,
With none to wake its chords.

Strange, subtle, are these mysteries,
And linked with unknown powers,
Marking mysterious links that bind
The spirit world to ours.

THE FATHER'S LOVE.

'Tis not my home—he made it home
With earnest love and care;
How can it be my own dear home,
And he no longer there?

I asked to meet my father's eyes,
But they were closed for me;
My father, would that I were laid
In the dark grave with thee.

Where shall I look for constant love,
To answer unto mine?
Others have many kindred hearts,
But I had only thine.

PARTING.

We do not know how much we love,
Until we come to leave;
An aged tree, a common flower,
Are things o'er which we grieve.
There is a pleasure in the pain
That brings us back the past again.

We linger while we turn away,
We cling while we depart;
And memories, unmarked till then,
Come crowding on the heart.
Let what will lure our onward way,
Farewell's a bitter word to say.

LOVE A MYSTERY.

It matters not its history—Love has wings,
Like lightning, swift and fatal; and it springs,
Like a wild flower, where it is least expected;
Existing, whether cherished or rejected.

A mystery art thou!—thou mighty one!
We speak thy name in beauty; yet we shun
To say thou art our guest; for who will own
His life thy empire, and his heart thy throne?

HAPPINESS WITHIN.

And yet it is a wasted heart:
It is a wasted mind
That seeks not in the inner world
Its happiness to find;

For happiness is like the bird
That broods above its nest,
And finds beneath its folded wings,
Life's dearest, and its best.

A little space is all that hope
Or love can ever take;
The wider that the circle spreads,
The sooner it will break.

THE POOR.

Few, save the poor, feel for the poor:
The rich know not how hard
It is to be of needful food
And needful rest debarred.

Their paths are paths of plenteousness,
They sleep on silk and down;
And never think how heavily
The weary head lies down.

They know not of the scanty meal,
With small pale faces round;
No fire upon the cold damp hearth
When snow is on the ground.

They never by the window lean,
And see the gay pass by;
Then take their weary task again,
But with a sadder eye.

THE LITTLENESS OF LIFE.

Life is so little in its vanities,
So mean, and looking to such worthless aim,
Truly the dust, of which we are a part,
Predominates amid mortality.
Great crimes have something of nobility;
Mighty their warning, vast is their remorse:
But these small faults, they make one half of life
Belong to lowest natures, and reduce
To their own wretched level nobler things.

FAITH DESTROYED.

Why did I love him? I looked up to him
With earnest admiration, and sweet faith.
I could forgive the miserable hours
His falsehood, and his only, taught my heart;
But I cannot forgive that for his sake,
My faith in good is shaken, and my hopes
Are pale and cold, for they have looked on death.
Why should I love him? he no longer is
That which I loved.

A LADY'S BEAUTY.

Ladye, thy white brow is fair,
Beauty's morning light is there;
And thine eye is like a star,
Dark as those of midnight are:
Round thee satin robe is flung;
Pearls upon thy neck are hung:
Yet thou wearest silk and gem,
As thou hadst forgotten them.
Lovelier is the ray that lies
On thy lip, and in thine eyes.

CURELESS WOUNDS.

False look, false hope, and falsest love,
All meteors sent to me,
To shew how they the heart could move,
And how deceiving be:
They left me darkened, crushed, alone;
My spirit's household god's o'erthrown.

The world itself is changed, and all
That was beloved before
Is vanished, and beyond recall,
For I can hope no more:
The sear of fire, the dint of steel,
Are easier than such wounds to heal.

PLEASURE BECOMES PAIN.

I cannot count the changes of my heart,
So often has it turned away from things
Once idols of its being. They depart—
Hopes, fancies, joys, illusions, as if wings
Sprang suddenly from all old ties, to start;
Or, if they linger longer, life but brings
Weariness, hollowness, canker, soil, and stain,
Till the heart saith of pleasure, it is pain.

EARTH LEADS TO HEAVEN.

This is a weary and a wretched life,
With nothing to redeem it but the heart.
Affection, earth's great purifier, stirs
Our embers into flame, and that ascends.
All finer natures walk this bitter world
But for a while, then Heaven asks its own,
And we can but remember and regret.

ILLUSION.

And thus it is with all that made life fair,
Gone with the freshness that it used to wear.
'Tis sad to mark the ravage that the heart
Makes of itself; how one by one depart
The colours that made hope. We seek, we find;
And find, too, charm has, with the change, declined.
Many things have I loved, that now to me
Are as a marvel how they loved could be;
Yet, on we go, desiring to the last
Illusions vain, as any in the past.

SELF-REPROACH.

Deep in the heart is an avenging power,
Conscious of right and wrong. There is no shape
Reproach can take, one half so terrible
As when that shape is given by ourselves.
Justice hath needful punishments, and crime
Is a predestined thing to punishment.
Or soon, or late, there will be no escape
From the stern consequence of its own act.
But in ourself is Fate's worst minister:
There is no wretchedness like self-reproach.

LOVE'S SLAVES.

Where is the heart that has not bowed
A slave, eternal Love to thee!
Look on the cold, the gay, the proud,
And is there one among them free?

And what must love be in a heart
All passion's fiery depths concealing,
Which has in its minutest part
More than another's whole of feeling!

GENIUS.

Alas! and must this be the fate
That all too often will await
The gifted hand, which shall awake
The poet's lute? and, for its sake,
All but its own sweet self resign,
Thou loved lute, to be only thine!
For what is genius, but deep feeling,
Wakening to glorious revealing?
And what is feeling, but to be
Alive to every misery?

FALSE APPEARANCES.

Who, that had looked on her that morn,
Could dream of all her heart had borne?
Her cheek was red, but who could know
'T was flushing with the strife below?
Her eye was bright, but who could tell
It shone with tears she strove to quell?
Her voice was gay, her step was light,
And beaming, beautiful, and bright:
It was as if life could confer
Nothing but happiness on her.
Ah! who could think that all so fair
Was semblance, and but misery there!

REMORSE.

Alas! he brings me back my early years,
And seems to tell me what I should have been.
How have I wasted God's best gifts, and turned
Their use against myself! It is too late!
Remorse and shame are crushing me to earth,
And I am desperate with my misery!

STERN TRUTH.

Life is made up of vanities—so small,
So mean, the common history of the day,—
That mockery seems the sole philosophy.
Then some stern truth starts up—cold, sudden, strange;
And we are taught what life is by despair:—
The toys, the trifles, and the petty cares,
Melt into nothingness—we know their worth;
The heart avenges every careless thought,
And makes us feel that fate is terrible.

THE POET'S PAST.

Remembrance makes the poet: 'tis the past
Lingering within him, with a keener sense
Than is upon the thoughts of common men,
Of what has been, that fills the actual world
With unreal likenesses of lovely shapes
That were, and are not; and the fairer they,
The more their contrast with existing things;
The more his power, the greater is his grief.
Are we then fallen from some noble star,
Whose oonsciousness is as an unknown curse:
And we feel capable of happiness
Only to know it is not of our sphere?

THE POWER OF WORDS.

'Tis a strange mystery, the power of words!
Life is in them, and death. A word can send
The crimson colour hurrying to the cheek.
Hurrying with many meanings; or can turn
The current cold and deadly to the heart.
Anger and fear are in them; grief and joy
Are on their sound; yet slight, impalpable:—
A word is but a breath of passing air.

MOONLIGHT.

The moonlight falleth lovely over earth;
And strange, indeed, must be the mind of man
That can resist its beautiful reproach.
How can hate work like fever in the soul
With such entire tranquillity around?
Evil must be our nature to refuse
Such gentle intercession.

UNGUIDED WILL.

God, in thy mercy, keep us with thy hand!
Dark are the thoughts that strive within the heart,
When evil passions rise like sudden storms,
Fearful and fierce! Let us not act those thoughts;
Leave not our course to our unguided will.
Left to ourselves, all crime is possible,
And those who seemed the most removed from guilt
Have sunk the deepest!

THE MASK OF GAIETY.

'Tis strange to think, if we could fling aside
The mask and mantle many wear from pride,
How much would be, we now so little guess,
Deep in each heart's undreamed, unsought recess!

The careless smile, like a bright banner borne;
The laughlike merriment; the lip of scorn;
And for a cloak, what is there that can be
So difficult to pierce as gaiety?

Too dazzling to be scanned, the gloomy brow
Seems to hide something it would not avow;
But mocking words, light laugh, and ready jest,
These are the bars, the curtains to the breast.

THE RUINED MIND.

Ah! sad it is to see the deck
Dismasted of some noble wreck;
And sad to see the marble stone
Defaced, and with gray moss o'ergrown;
And sad to see the broken lute
For ever to its music mute,
But what is lute, or fallen tower,
Or ship sunk in its proudest hour,
To awe and majesty combined
In their worst shape—the ruined mind?

SORROWS AND PLEASURES.

It is an awful thing how we forget
The sacred ties that bind us each to each.
Our pleasures might admonish us, and say,
Tremble at that delight which is unshared:
Its selfishness must be its punishment.
All have their sorrows, and how strange it seems
They do not soften more the general heart:
Sorrows should be those universal links
That draw all life together.

THE YOUNG POET'S FATE.

Trace the young poet's fate
Fresh from his solitude—the child of dreams
His heart upon his lip, he seeks the world
To find him fame and fortune, as if life
Were like a fairy tale. His song has led
The way before him; flatteries fill his ear,
And he seems happy in so many friends.
What marvel if he somewhat overrate
His talents and his state!

THE FEARFUL TRUST.

It is a fearful trust, the trust of love.
In fear, not hope, should woman's heart receive
A guest so terrible. Ah! never more
Will the young spirit know its joyous hours
Of quiet hopes and innocent delights;
Its childhood is departed.

PEACE WROUGHT BY PAIN.

Over that pallid face were wrought
The characters of painful thought;
But on that lip, and in that eye,
Were patience, faith, and piety.
The hope that is not of this earth,
The peace that has in pain its birth;
As if, in the tumult of this life,
Its sorrow, vanity, and strife,
Had been but as the lightning's shock,
Shedding rich ore upon the rock:
Though in the trial scorched and riven,
The gold it wins, is gold from heaven.

CUSTOM AND INDIFFERENCE.

I cannot choose, but marvel at the way
In which we pass our lives from day to day;
Learning strange lessons in the human heart;
And yet, like shadows, letting them depart.
Is misery so familiar, that we bring
Ourselves to view it as "a usual thing?"
We do too little feel each other's pain;
We do too much relax the social chain
That binds us to each other; slight the care
There is for grief, in which we have no share.

YOUTH AND LOVE.

Young, loving, and beloved—these are brief words;
And yet they touch on all the finer chords,
Whose music is our happiness; the tone
May die away, and be no longer known,
In the sad changes brought by darker years,
When the heart has to treasure up its tears,
And life looks mournful on an altered scene—
Still it is much to think that it has been.

THE EARLY DREAM.

Ah! never another dream can be
Like that early dream of ours,
When Hope, like a child, lay down to sleep
Amid the folded flowers.

But Hope has wakened since, and wept
Itself, like a rainbow, away;
And the flowers have faded, and fallen around,
We have none for a wreath to-day.

Now, Truth has taken the place of Hope,
And our hearts are like winter hours;
Little has after life been worth
That early dream of ours.

THE SICK ROOM.

'Tis midnight, and a starry shower
Weeps its bright tears o'er life and flower;
Sweet, silent, beautiful the night,
Sufficing for her own delight.
But other lights than sky and star,
From yonder casement gleam afar;
The lamp subdued to the heart's gloom
Of suffering, and of sorrow's room.

THE CHARM GONE.

I did not wish to see his face,
  I knew it could not be,
Though not a look had altered there,
  What once it was to me.

Since last we met, a fairy spell
  Had been from each removed;
How strange it is that those can change
  Who were so much beloved!

It is a bitter thing to know
  The heart's enchantment o'er;
But 'tis more bitter still to feel
  It can be charmed no more!

THE FAREWELL.

Farewell!
Shadows and scenes that have, for many hours,
Been my companions; I part from ye like friends—
Dear and familiar ones—with deep sad thoughts,
And hopes, almost misgivings!

FUGITIVE POEMS

OF AN EARLIER DATE.

THE LAST LOOK.

" 'Tis the very lightness of childish impressions that makes them so dear and lasting."

THE shade of the willow fell dark on the tide,
When the maid left her pillow to stand by its side ;
The wind, like a sweet voice, was heard in the tree,
And a soft lulling music swept in from the sea.

The land was in darkness, for mountain and tower
Flung before them the shadows of night's deepest hour ;
The moonlight unbroken lay white on the wave,
Till the wide sea was clear as the shield of the brave.

She flung from her forehead its curls of bright hair,—
Ere those ringlets fell round her another was there ;
Red flushed her cheek's crimson, and dark drooped her eye,
A stranger had known 'twas her lover stood by.

One note on his sea-call, the signal he gave,
And a boat like a plaything, danced light on the wave ;
Her head on his shoulder, her hand in his hand,
Yet the maiden looked back as they rowed from the strand.

She wept not for parents, she wept not for friends,
Yet fast the bright rain from her dark eye descends ;
The portionless orphan left nothing behind
But the green leaves—the wild flowers sown by the wind.

But how the heart clings to that earliest love,
Which haunts the lone garden, and hallows the grove ;
Which makes the old oak-tree and primrose-bank fair,
With the memories of childhood whose playtime was there.

'Tis our spirits which fling round the joy which they take;
The best of our pleasures are those which we make:
We look to the past, and remember the while,
Our own buoyant step and our own sunny smile.

A pathway of silver was tracked on the wave,
The oars left behind them the light which they gave,
And the slight boat flew over the moonlighted brine,
Till the coast afar-off was one shadowy line.

They reached the proud ship, and the silken sails spread,
And the gallant flag shone like a meteor blood red;
And forth from the scabbard flashed out each bright sword,
In fealty to her the young bride of their lord.

From a cup of pale gold then she sipped the clear wine,
And clasped on her arm the green emeralds shine;
The silver lamps swinging with perfume were fed,
And the rich fur beneath her light footstep was spread.

From the small cabin window she looked to the shore,
Lost in night she could see its dim outline no more:
She sighed as she thought of her earlier hours,
"Ah, who will now watch o'er my favourite flowers!"

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

AN ANECDOTE FROM PLUTARCH.

Glorious was the marble hall
With the sight and sound of festival,
For autumn had sent its golden hoard,
And summer its flowers to grace the board.
Inside and out the goblets shine,
Outside with gems, inside with wine;
And silver lamps shed round their light
Like the moonrise on an eastern night.
Gay laughs were heard; when these were mute
Came a voluptuous song and lute;

And fair nymphs floated round, whose feet
Were light as the air on which they beat;
Their steps had no sound, they moved along
Like spirits that lived in the breath of song.

Beneath the canopy's purple sweep,
Like a sunset cloud on the twilight deep,
Sate the king of the feast, stately and tall,
Who look'd what he was, the lord of all.
A glorious scar was upon his brow,
And furrows that time and care will plough.
His battle-suns had left their soil,
And traces of tempest and traces of toil;
Yet was he one for whom woman's sigh
Breathes its deepest idolatry.
His that soft and worshipping air
She loves so well her lover should wear;
His that low and pleading tone
That makes the yielding heart its own;
And, more than all, his was the fame
That victory flings on the soldier's name.

Yet those meanings high that speak,
Scorn on the lip, fire on the cheek,
Tell of somewhat above such scenes as these,
With their wasting and midnight revelries.
Albeit he drain'd the purple bowl,
And heard the song till they madden'd his soul;
Yet his forehead grew pale, and then it burn'd—
As if in disdain from the feast he turn'd;
And his inward thoughts sought out a home
And dwelt on thy stately memory, Rome.
But his glance met her's beside, and again
His spirit clung to its precious chain.

With haughty brow, and regal hand,
As born but for worship and command,
Yet with smiles that told she knew full well
The power of woman's softest spell,

Leant that Egyptian queen: a braid
Of jewels shone 'mid her dark hair's shade.
One pearl on her forehead hung, whose gem
Was worth a monarch's diadem,
And an emerald cestus bound the fold
Of her robe that shone with purple and gold.
All spoke of pomp, all spoke of pride,
And yet they were as nothing beside
Her radiant cheek, her flashing eye,
For their's was beauty's regality.
It was not that every feature apart,
Seem'd as if carved by the sculptor's art;
It was not the marble brow, nor the hair
That lay in its jewel-starr'd midnight there;
Nor her neck, like the swan's, for grace and whiteness,
Nor her step, like the wind of the south for lightness;
But it was a nameless spell, like the one
That makes the opal so fair a stone,
The spell of change:—for a little while
Her red lip shone with its summer smile—
You look'd again, and that smile was fled,
Sadness and softness were there instead.
This moment all bounding gaiety,
With a laugh that seem'd the heart's echo to be;
Now it was grace and mirth, and now
It was princely step and lofty brow;
By turns the woman and the queen,
And each as the other had never been.

But on her lip, and cheek, and brow,
Were traces that wildest passions avow;
All that a southern sun and sky
Could light in the heart, and flash from the eye;
A spirit that might by turns be led
To all we love, and all we dread.
And in that eye darkness and light
Mingled, like her own climate's night,
Till even he on her bosom leaning,
Shrank at times from its fiery meaning.

There was a cloud on that warrior's face,
That wine, music, smiles, could not quite erase:
He sat on a rich and royal throne,
But a fear would pass that he sat there alone.
He stood not now in his native land,
With kinsman and friends at his red right hand;
And the goblet pass'd unkiss'd, till the brim
Had been touch'd by another as surety for him.

She, his enchantress, mark'd his fear,
But she let not her secret thought appear.
Wreath'd with her hair were crimson flowers,
The brightest that form the lotus bowers;—
She pluck'd two buds, and fill'd them with wine,
And, laughing said, "this pledge be mine!"

Her smile shone over their bloom like a charm,
He raised them up, but she caught his arm,
And bade them bring to the festive hall
One doom'd to death, a criminal.

He drank of the wine, he gasped for breath,
For those bright, but poison'd flowers, held death;
And turn'd she to Antony with the wreath,
While her haughty smile hid the sigh beneath,
"Where had thy life been at this hour,
Had not my Love been more than my Power?
—Away, if thou fearest,—love never must,
Never can live with one shade of distrust."

EGERIA'S GROTTO.

A SILVER Fountain with a changeful shade
Of interwoven leaves and blossoms made;
The leaves that turn'd the light to emerald green,
While colour'd buds like rainbows shone between:
And on the southern bank, as if beset
With ocean pearls, grew the white violet;

Above there stood a graceful orange-tree,
Where Spring and Summer dwelt in amity,
And shared the boughs between them,—one with flowers
Its silver offering to the sunshine hours;
The other with its fruit, like Indian gold,
Or those bright apples the last lover roll'd
In Atalanta's path and won the day—
Alas! how often gold has led astray!
The shadow of old chestnut trees was round—
They were the guardians of the hallow'd ground;
The hunter in his chase had past it by,
So closely was it screen'd from curious eye.
On the bank opposite to that, where strew'd
Sigh'd the pale violets' sweet multitude,
There was a little Grotto, and like stars
The roof was set with crystal and with spars
Trembling in light;—it needed much their aid,
For at the entrance the dark branches play'd
Of a lone cypress, and the summer-day
Was changed to twilight as it made its way.
It is Egeria's Grotto. Her bright hair
Has left its odour on the fragrant air;
The echo of her step is lingering still
In the low music of the lute-toned rill;
And here the flowers are beautiful and young
As when beneath her ivory feet they sprung.
Ay, this made Love delicious as a dream,
Save that it was too constant but to seem—
No time to tire, gone almost soon as seen;
Known but by happiness, that it had been—
A shade, but such a shade as rainbows cast
Upon the clouds, in its first beauty past—
A mystery, such mystery as the breath
Lurking in summer sweetness on a wreath,
Which we would but enjoy, but not explore,
Too blest in the pleased sense to desire more.
And thus if Love would last, thus must it be—
A wish, a vision, and a fantasie.

STANZAS ON THE NEW YEAR.

I stood between the meeting Years,
The coming and the past,
And I ask'd of the future one,
Wilt thou be like the last?

The same in many a sleepless night,
In many an anxious day?
Thank Heaven! I have no prophet's eye
To look upon thy way!

For Sorrow like a phantom sits
Upon the last Year's close.
How much of grief, how much of ill,
In its dark breast repose!

Shadows of faded Hopes flit by,
And ghosts of Pleasures fled:
How have they chang'd from what they were!
Cold, colourless, and dead.

I think on many a wasted hour,
And sicken o'er the void;
And many darker are behind,
On worse than nought employ'd.

Oh Vanity! alas, my heart!
How widely hast thou stray'd,
And misused every golden gift
For better purpose made!

I think on many a once-loved friend
As nothing to me now;
And what can mark the lapse of time
As does an alter'd brow?

Perhaps 'twas but a careless word
That sever'd Friendship's chain;
And angry Pride stands by each gap,
Lest they unite again.

Less sad, albeit more terrible,
To think upon the dead,
Who quiet in the lonely grave
Lay down the weary head.

For faith, and hope, and peace, and trust,
Are with their happier lot:
Though broken is their bond of love,
At least *we* broke it not.—

Thus thinking of the meeting years,
The coming and the past,
I needs must ask the future one:
Wilt thou be like the last?

There came a sound, but not of speech,
That to my thought replied,
"Misery is the marriage-gift
That waits a mortal bride:

But lift thine hopes from this base earth,
This waste of worldly care,
And wed thy faith to yon bright sky,
For Happiness dwells there!"

STANZAS.

I KNOW it is not made to last,
The dream which haunts my soul;
The shadow even now is cast
Which soon will wrap the whole.

Ah! waking dreams that mock the day
Have other end than those,
Which come beneath the moonlight ray,
And charm the eyes they close.

The vision colouring the night
'Mid bloom and brightness wakes,
Banished by morning's cheerful light,
Which gladdens while it breaks.

But dreams which fix the waking eye
With deeper spells than sleep,
When hours unnoted pass us by,
From such we wake and weep.

We wake,—but not to sleep again;
The heart has lost its youth,—
The morning light which wakes us then,
Calm, cold, and stern, is Truth.

I know all this, and yet I yield
My spirit to the snare,
And gather flowers upon the field,
Though Woe and Fate are there.

The maid divine, who bound her wreath
On Etna's fatal plain,
Knew not the foe that lurked beneath
The summer-clad domain.

But I—I read my doom aright,
I snatched a few glad hours,
Then where will be the past delight—
And where my gathered flowers?

Gone—gone for ever! let them go!
The present is my meed—
Aye, let me worship, ere I know
The falsehood of my creed.

The time may come—they say it must—
When thou, my idol now,
Like all we treasure and we trust,
Will mock the votive vow.

And when the temple's on the ground—
The altar overthrown—
Too late the bitter moral's found,—
The folly was our own.

It matters not, my heart is full
With present hopes and fears,
The future cannot quite annul—
Let them be bought by tears.

Though sorrow, disbelief, and blame
May load the fallen shrine;
To think that once it bore thy name
Will make it still divine.

And such it was—for it was love's;
And love its heaven brings,
And from life's daily path removes
All other meaner things;

And calls from out the common heart
Its music, and its fire;
Like that the early hours impart
To Memnon's sculptured lyre.

A touch of light—a tone of song—
The sweet enchantment's o'er;
The thrilling heart and lute ere long
Confess the spell do more.

The music from the heart is gone;
The light has left the sky;
And time again flows calmly on,
The haunted hour past by.

And thus with love the charmed earth
Grows actual, cold, and drear;
But that sweet phantasy was worth
All else most precious here.

'Mid the dark web that life must weave,
'Twill linger in the mind
As angels spread their wings, yet leave
The trace of heaven behind.

Ah! let the heart that worships thee
By every change be proved:
Its dearest memory will be
To know that once it loved.

THE OLD TIMES.

Do you recall what now is living only
Amid the memories garnered at the heart?—
The quiet garden, quiet and so lonely,
Where fruit and flowers had each an equal part?
When we had gathered cowslips in the meadow
We used to bear them to the ancient seat,
Moss-grown, beneath the apple-tree's soft shadow,
Which flung its rosy blossoms at our feet,
In the old, old times,
The dear old times.

Near was the well o'er whose damp walls were weeping
Stonecrop, and grounsel, and pale yellow flowers,
While o'er the banks the strawberry plants were creeping
In the white beauty of June's earliest hours.
The currant-bush and lilac grew together;
The bean's sweet breath was blended with the rose;
Alike rejoicing in the pleasant weather
That brought the bloom to these, the fruit to those,
In the old, old times,
The dear old times.

There was no fountain over marble falling;
But the bees murmur'd one perpetual song,
Like soothing waters, and the birds were calling
Amid the fruit-tree blossoms all day long;
Upon the sunny grass-plot stood the dial,
Whose measured time strange contrast with ours made:
Ah! was it omen of life's after trial,
That even then the hours were told in shade,
In the old, old times,
The dear old times?

But little recked we then of those sick fancies
To which in after life the spirit yields:
Our world was of the fairies and romances
With which we wandered o'er the summer fields;
Then did we question of the down-balls blowing
To know if some slight wish would come to pass;
If showers we feared, we sought where there was growing
Some weather-flower which was our weather-glass:
In the old, old times,
The dear old times.

Yet my heart warms at these fond recollections,
Breaking the heavy shadow on my day.
Ah! who hath cared for all the deep affections—
The love, the kindness I have thrown away?
The dear old garden! There is now remaining
As little of its bloom as rests with me.
Thy only memory is this sad complaining,
Mourning that never more for us can be
The old, old times,
The dear old times.

SONG.

Oh! breathe not of love,
Or breathe not to me,
If constant for aye
Must your love-motto be.
Where are the things
The fairest on earth;
Is it not in their change
That their beauty has birth?
The neck of the peacock,
The iris's dyes,
The light in the opal,
The April-day skies:—

Would they be lovely,
As all of them are,
But for the chance
And the change that are there?
Breathe no vow to me,
I will give none of mine;
Love must light in an instant,
As quickly decline.
His blushes, his sighs,
Are bewildering things;
Then away with his fetters,
And give me his wings.

CI-DEVANT!

I cannot, if I would, call back again
The early feelings of my love for thee,
I love thee ever, but it is in vain
To dream Love can be what it was to me.
Some of its flowers have fallen from the chain,
And showed that iron under them could be—
And it has entered in my soul: no more
Can that soul revel in its dreams of yore.

O NO, my heart can never be
Again in lighted hopes the same—
The love that lingers there for thee
Has more of ashes than of flame.

Still deem not but that I am yet
As much as ever all thine own;
Though now the seal of love be set
On a heart chilled almost to stone.

And can you marvel? only look
On all that heart has had to bear—
On all that it has yet to brook,
And wonder then at its despair.

Oh, Love is destiny, and mine
Has long been struggled with in vain—
Victim or votary, at thy shrine
There I am vow'd—there must remain.

My first—my last—my only love.
O blame me not for that I dwell
On all that I have had to prove
Of Love's despair, of Hope's farewell.

I think upon mine early dreams,
When Youth, Hope, Joy, together sprung;
The gushing forth of mountain-streams,
On which no shadow had been flung.

When Love seemed only meant to make
A sunshine on life's silver seas—
Alas, that we should ever wake,
And wake to weep o'er dreams like these!

I loved, and Love was like to me
The spirit of a faery tale,
When we have but to wish, and be
Whatever wild wish may prevail.

I deemed that Love had power to part
The chains and blossoms of life's thrall,
Make an Elysium of the heart,
And shed its influence over all.

I linked it with all lovely things,
Beautiful pictures, tones of song,
All those pure, high imaginings
That but in thought to earth belong.

And all that was unreal became
Reality when blent with thee—
It was but colouring that flame,
More than a lava flood to me.

I was not happy—Love forbade
Peace by its feverish restlessness;
But this was sweet, and then I had
Hope, which relies on happiness.

I need not say how, one by one,
Love's flowers have dropp'd from off Love's chain;
Enough to say that they are gone,
And that they cannot bloom again.

I know not what the pangs may be
That hearts betray'd or slighted prove—
I speak but of the misery
That waits on fond and mutual love.

The torture of an absent hour,
When doubts mock Reason's faint control:—
'Tis fearful thinking of the power
Another holds upon our soul!

To think another has in thrall
All of life's best and dearest part—
Our hopes, affections, trusted all
To that frail bark—the human heart.

To yield thus to another's reign;—
To live but in another's breath—
To double all life's powers of pain—
To die twice in another's death;

While these things present to me seem,
And what can now the past restore,
Love as I may, yet I can dream
Of happiness in Love no more.

THE END.

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